

1937-38-39.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

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REPORT

ON THE

ADMINISTRATION

OF

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

FOR

YEAR 1937-38.

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An outstanding case was the pursuit and capture of an aboriginal named Humbert Tommy, who attacked a Constable and a tracker with spears, severely wounding the tracker and slightly wounding the Constable. This happened in the vicinity of Timber Creek.

As this was a very serious happening and the aboriginal had escaped into the bush, it was decided that every effort should be made to apprehend him and Constable Fitzer, a most experienced Police Officer, was detailed for this duty. Constable Fitzer, with trackers, reached Victoria River Downs on the night of the 10th October, and camped on the river searching both banks. He found that Humbert Tommy had vacated a camp a short distance up the river. Constable Fitzer then assembled his plant and searched the outlying waters in the hope of picking up tracks. He was successful in this and riding day and night he found that he was very close to the fugitive.

With black trackers, at daylight two days later, Constable Fitzer surrounded an area on the river, which could be described as jungle country, and the next morning the aboriginal in question, realizing that further flight was hopeless, walked to the camp and gave himself up. He was subsequently dealt with in the Supreme Court.

The report of the Superintendent of Police also discloses that 720 persons in the Northern Territory were convicted during the year. This is a very large increase on last year's figures but a perusal of the Superintendent's report will show that drunkenness and other offences in connexion with drunkenness, were responsible for nearly 50 per cent. of the cases. The increase in the number of cases is also due to the fact that the Police had received very clear instructions that breaches of regulations were not to be tolerated and that offenders should be prosecuted in the Police Courts. This particularly applies to the efforts of the Police in detecting breaches of the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, the Methylated Spirits Ordinance and the Aboriginals Ordinance. In connexion with the sale of methylated spirits most stringent supervision has been carried out and there have been upwards of 100 convictions obtained, including 30 convictions against Europeans who were heavily punished either by fine or by imprisonment.

It has been necessary during the year to open new Police Stations at Groote Eylandt in connexion with the construction work carried out in the erection of a flying boat base and at Hatches Creek and Wauchope Creek; these last two stations were opened on account of the number of men engaged in winning wolfram at both places.

#### MEDICAL.

The year under review was characterized by comparative freedom from communicable disease.

Dengue, reported sporadically throughout the year, did not attain epidemic proportions at any time and its incidence was determined largely by the access of new non-immune population.

The daily average at the Darwin Hospital was 44.4, an increase of 13.4 on the preceding year. During the last months of the year the hospital was taxed to a maximum capacity and provision of additional space is a matter of urgency.

During the year an effort was made to check the high infant mortality amongst aboriginals by the establishment of a welfare centre at the Bagot Compound. Infants suffering from malnutrition were removed from the camps and placed under the supervision of a nurse, who supervised their feeding and trained attendants in the preparation of the food and its administration. The scope of this welfare centre was later extended to provide for the care and treatment of native children suffering from chronic and minor ailments, whose condition did not warrant admission to hospital but required a great deal more attention than was likely to be obtained in the camp.

Ten children remained under care at the close of the year and a very gratifying improvement was revealed in their development and general condition. It is too early to gauge the success of this measure in the reduction of infant mortality, but results to date suggest that it will prove of great value in reducing the death rate and improving the health of native children.

There has been a steady increase in the European population of the Territory during the year. This has been due to the increase in establishment, coast defences, the extensive works programme undertaken by the Commonwealth and to the development of commercial air services.

Deaths for the year totalled 65, 55 males and 10 females. The average age at death for all races was 51 years and for Europeans 52.5 years. Fifteen per cent. of European deaths were due to violence, a lower proportion than has been recorded for some years.

#### ABORIGINAL MATTERS.

The Commonwealth Government has made it very clear that the carrying out of an adequate policy towards the aboriginals of the Northern Territory is a national concern, and steps have been taken to improve conditions. Approval has been given for the construction of a large new compound some 4 miles from the town of Darwin where families will be encouraged to

live, where useful work will be required from natives and where aboriginals of both sexes who are engaged in domestic work during the day time in Darwin will be adequately and comfortably housed.

Although there has been some sporadic criticism of the policy of the Government; its actions and intentions have been endorsed by the great majority of Australian citizens who agree that there is a very definite obligation towards the Australian aboriginal. Discussions have been held and reports exchanged regarding a clear and embracing policy in connexion with native matters and it is probable that this will be made public by the Government before this Report is printed. For that reason I do not consider it necessary to make further comments at this juncture, except to say that I agree entirely with the Government's attitude.

I am able to observe the Australian aboriginal under different and varying conditions in the Northern Territory. I see him as a tracker, as a Government messenger, as stockman, as handy man and in domestic service, and in the patrol service. In all these tasks he acquits himself well. His mind is child-like, and, if this be remembered, he is trustworthy. In performing the work of a tracker, he is, I should think, unsurpassed.

There was one disagreeable case during the year when an aboriginal attempted to commit a serious offence, but this was entirely an isolated instance and a most unusual one. It is not at all indicative of the characteristics of the Australian aboriginal.

During the year a position of a teacher for aboriginals was created and Mr. P. Jensen, who had been associated with the Aboriginals Department in Queensland, was appointed.

#### SHIPPING AND CARGOES.

The report of the Manager of the North Australia Railways shows that the amount of inward cargo over the Darwin wharf was 13,678 tons, the increase being 2,059 tons.

I again refer to my comments in my previous Report upon the lack of facilities for unloading and loading cargoes in Darwin. Since I drew attention to this matter my observations have been confirmed by the report of the Northern Territory Investigation Committee. I differ, however, from the Committee in the relative degree of urgency. I again reiterate that it is my opinion that until these facilities are improved and increased the cost of materials for improvements and otherwise in the Northern Territory is going to be a very considerable, possibly a deterrent, factor.

The unloading rate per hour at the Darwin wharf for last year was approximately eight tons per hour per hatch, or 24 tons per hour. This is only one-third of the unloading rate per hour in other portions of the Commonwealth. As a matter of fact the unloading rate average for other parts is approximately 30 tons per hour per hatch, but for the sake of comparison I will take it as being 24 tons per hour per hatch, which gives a total of 72 tons per hour. The difference is so striking that it does not appear necessary to add any further comment.

#### INDUSTRIAL.

In July, industrial unrest occurred upon the Darwin waterfront and a strike was declared, when the Burns Philp steamer *Marella* was in port. As the town was very short of foodstuffs, being entirely dependent upon southern supplies, except for meat, certain measures had to be taken to unload the vessel by volunteers. This was carried out. Otherwise, with a few minor incidents, the industrial situation has been good.

#### MISSING AIRMEN.

During the year two searches for missing airmen were carried out. The first one was for Doctor Fenton of the Northern Territory Medical Services, and the second for Doctor King of the Aerial Medical Services, stationed at Wyndham.

In Doctor Fenton's case, he left Katherine by air for Beetaloo on the 20th September to carry out certain medical review work. On the 24th September, as no word had been received from Doctor Fenton, I decided that a search should at once be instituted and a message was sent that evening to the Air Board, Melbourne, asking for permission for Flight-Lieutenant Hely, who had arrived in an R.A.A.F. plane at Katherine, to undertake a search. This was approved by the Air Board and Flight-Lieutenant Hely left at once for Newcastle Waters area for this purpose.

A land party was also sent out along the route that Doctor Fenton would have flown and as no trace was discovered it was decided to augment the search in every possible way. Other planes were brought into the search including for two days the Lockheed Electra running the Darwin-Adelaide mail service and on Tuesday the 28th September, Flight-Lieutenant Hely located Doctor Fenton 30 miles north-east of Tanumbirini where he had made a forced landing owing to shortage of petrol.

Doctor Fenton had landed in the vicinity of water and therefore was able to maintain himself until he was found, but he suffered considerably from exposure and shortage of food. The plane was undamaged.

## REPORT OF THE DISTRICT OFFICER, ALICE SPRINGS.

The year 1937-38 has been a very satisfactory one so far as the southern portion of the Northern Territory is concerned. The chief industries which are pastoral and mining have flourished—the former due to good and well distributed rainfall and the latter due to the maintenance of the high prices for metals.

The flourishing of these industries has caused a slight increase in population although the actual increase is difficult to estimate owing to the movement of population between the various mining fields.

The health of the population has been generally satisfactory although the usual epidemics of colds and eye troubles have occurred. Outbreaks of infantile paralysis also occurred at Alice Springs and Hermannsburg but quarantine regulations were enforced and very little infection occurred.

An increase in the tourist traffic has become apparent and organized tours are conducted by Bonds Tours and the Pioneer Tourist Service. A considerable number of persons travelling independently have also visited Alice Springs and it is not now uncommon to hear tourists remark that they intend to come again to Alice Springs. This is attributable to the improved accommodation and service now obtainable in Alice Springs without which tourists would not be able adequately to appreciate the natural attractions of the country. Even at present, however, the accommodation available is inadequate to meet requirements during the winter months and any increase in the traffic will necessitate the provision of additional accommodation and/or new premises.

The air service between Adelaide and Darwin which also serves Alice Springs and Tennant Creek has proved of very considerable advantage. The service has been most efficiently conducted by Guinea Airways Limited; the machines in use are of a very satisfactory type and the schedule has been well maintained. The air service was of particular value at the end of February when the rail service was dislocated for a considerable period by floods.

A feature of the Administration which has been highly appreciated is the increased co-operation which now exists between Alice Springs and the Head Office at Darwin and this has been assisted by the frequent exchange of communication made possible by the Adelaide-Darwin Air Service.

The development of the country by the provision and improvement of roads and water supplies has been continued and very good progress has been made.

The Payne Committee which was appointed to investigate the pastoral industry and advise the Government as to any manner in which it could be developed concluded its investigations in July, 1937 and subsequently rendered its report.

An investigation of the Mining Industry which was made by Mr. A. H. Telfer of the Western Australian Mines Department was conducted about the same time.

On 11th July, 1937, the Honorable the Minister for the Interior and the Secretary to the Department passed through Alice Springs and during the year His Honour the Administrator visited Alice Springs on two occasions. On another occasion he visited Tennant Creek.

The undermentioned Heads of Branches visited Alice Springs during the year—

- Mr. L. H. A. Giles—Government Secretary.
- Mr. A. V. Stretton—Superintendent of Police.
- Mr. N. C. Bell—Director of Mines.
- Mr. F. P. Shepherd—Chief Surveyor.
- Mr. F. A. C. Bishop—Chief Inspector of Stock.
- Mr. E. W. Stoddart—Commonwealth Works Director.

The town of Alice Springs which is the chief settlement in the southern portion of the Territory is rapidly improving. The Administration has provided an electricity plant which supplies the town; a fully equipped hospital and a modern gaol are being provided and residences are also being erected. The institutions mentioned will serve practically the whole of the southern portion of the territory as well as Alice Springs and district and it is also anticipated that the hospital will serve people in the northern portion of South Australia. A number of buildings have also been erected by residents but, notwithstanding this, there is still a very definite shortage of housing accommodation.

The beautifying of the town is receiving attention. Streets have been formed and ornamental and shade trees planted.

During the year, an attempt was made by Mr. Bryce Russell to cross the Simpson Desert by camels. His starting-off place was Charlotte Waters but the attempt ended in failure and it appears that Mr. Russell must have perished. A search was made by air but no trace of him or his plant has been found.

## ABORIGINALS.

During the year the number of depots at which aged and infirm aboriginals are supplied with rations, clothing, blankets, &c., was increased by the establishment of a depot at Jay Creek where an Aboriginal Reserve was proclaimed. The purpose of this depot is to encourage natives to live in their natural surroundings and to keep them away from the town of Alice Springs. All the depots previously in operation have been maintained. They are all in the vicinity of Police stations and under the supervision of police officers. In many cases the aboriginals live their normal lives and merely come to the depot on the recognized ration distribution day to receive their issue—sometimes walking miles for this purpose.

At Jay Creek the depot is in the charge of Patrol Officer Strehlow who resides on the Reserve and who spends most of his time there.

The health of aboriginals has been reasonably good although the usual epidemics have been in evidence.

The medical hut has been maintained on the camping ground at Alice Springs but this will no doubt be placed out of commission when the new hospital, which includes provisions for aboriginals, is completed.

As usual there has been a certain amount of minor offences committed by aboriginals who have been dealt with through the Courts. There have also been a few more serious offences including two killings for which aboriginals were committed for trial before the Supreme Court. A certain amount of disturbance has been caused by aboriginals in the south-western portion of the Territory and police action has been taken. Patrol Officer Strehlow also visited the district to investigate the trouble.

At the Half-caste Institution Mr. and Mrs McCoy—the Superintendent and Matron—are doing good work and the inmates all appear to be well cared for and happy. The number of inmates has decreased slightly and they now number 127. Their health has been comparatively good but the usual epidemics of colds and sore eyes have occurred.

With the number of inmates any epidemic which occurs naturally spreads rapidly. It has on occasion been necessary to close the school for short periods when such epidemics have been prevalent. Recently eye trouble became so severe that it was necessary to obtain the services of a nurse to attend to them solely.

An additional teacher has been obtained for the school and the teaching staff now number three. The term of service of the present Head Teacher has practically expired and it has been arranged that a male Head Teacher be appointed in future. The education of the inmates is confined to the usual school subjects and no instruction is given in technical or vocational subjects, although I would very much like to see some technical training included as part of the educational instruction at this Institution.

At Hermannsburg the Finke River Mission has continued its work and the Mission has become to a large extent self-supporting. It also encourages the natives to support themselves. Those who are not actually employed by the mission are encouraged to make whips, belts and other leather work, wood work and so forth while the females do needlework very efficiently. The Mission supplies the material and arranges the sales—the aboriginals being individually credited with the value of the labour. A recent innovation has been the provision of a tannery and very good results have been obtained.

The value of the water supply which is conveyed by a pipe line from the Koprilya Springs is very apparent. Not only has it permitted the maintenance of a large vegetable garden but has made ample water available for all purposes. The Superintendent (Reverend Albrecht) claims that the vegetables which have been grown for the aboriginals have wonderfully improved the health of the community so much so that tuberculosis is not now as prevalent as formerly.

Patrol Officer Strehlow has been supplied with a motor vehicle to facilitate his work and has made some patrols. He has also assisted in investigations in matters in which aboriginals were concerned. Chiefly, however, he has been at Jay Creek where a number of old and infirm aboriginals have congregated and are supplied with rations.

During the outbreak of infantile paralysis in Alice Springs all natives were kept out of the town with the result that there were very few cases of infection amongst the aboriginals.

The authorities of the Roman Catholic Church have opened a Mission Station for aboriginals in the vicinity of Alice Springs. Incorporated with the Mission is a school for aboriginal children. The Mission is kept clean and tidy and is well conducted.

#### EDUCATION.

At Alice Springs, the number of pupils in the public school decreased slightly due to the opening of a convent by the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church. The public school, however, is still attended by the great majority of the children of the town. At the end of the school year in December last, the term of service of the Head Teacher (Miss Robb) expired and she was replaced by Mr. D. G. Quin of the South Australian Education Department—a teacher of high standing, who has brought the most modern systems of teaching into operation. A high standard of efficiency is being attained.

The Tennant Creek School has continued to function and the number of pupils has remained practically unchanged.

The Convent School at Alice Springs, although lacking in some facilities, has a fair enrolment including some children from the country districts, and is progressing satisfactorily.

At the Half-caste Institution, the teaching staff has been increased to three. The school building is far from satisfactory and it is hoped that a more suitable building will be provided in the not far distant future. Arrangements have been made for a male head teacher to replace the present head teacher on the expiration of her term of service in the Northern Territory.

The Roman Catholic Church authorities have provided some educational facilities on the aboriginal reserve at Alice Springs for the education of aboriginal children but it is not anticipated that these children will attain to any high standard.

The school for aboriginal children at the Hermannsburg Mission is being maintained.

The public schools at Alice Springs and Tennant Creek and the Half-caste Institution School were examined by Inspector Johncock of the South Australian Education Department and by the Supervisor of Education (Mr. Lampe) during the year, when it was found that satisfactory progress was being made.

The annual scholarship for 1937 for which pupils sat at both Alice Springs and Tennant Creek was won by Mary Farrell of the Alice Springs School.

Mona Johanssen who had previously won a scholarship made satisfactory progress in her secondary education and was granted an extension of her scholarship for a further two years.

Children who were not able to attend any of the established schools continued to receive tuition by correspondence from the South Australian Correspondence School.

#### GAOL.

The number of prisoners maintained in the Alice Springs Gaol increased by about 50 per cent. over the number during the previous year. The health of the prisoners was good but the usual epidemics of colds during the winter months were experienced. No deaths occurred in the Alice Springs Gaol during the year. One prisoner was transferred to the Darwin Gaol. The conduct of prisoners was good, only four offences being dealt with by visiting Justices. The majority of the prisoners were aboriginals.

The new gaol is at present under construction and it is anticipated that it will be completed by the end of September. The establishment is being constructed on modern lines and will be a vast improvement on the present gaol premises which are really a large lock-up.

#### HEALTH.

The general health of the community has been good. The public are served by two medical officers—one stationed at Alice Springs and the other at Tennant Creek.

Owing largely to the prevalence of flies in this portion of the Territory, bad eyes are periodically a source of trouble to which serious attention must be given.

The epidemic of infantile paralysis which raged in the Southern and Eastern States spread to this portion of the Territory but, owing to the quarantine and other preventative precautions adopted, did not gain a firm footing. In the Alice Springs district a few cases were located, including two which proved fatal. At Tennant Creek only one case occurred.

## PASTORAL.

The year has been quite a satisfactory one for the pastoral industry. Although conditions were rather dry during the first few months of the year, a good rain fell in November and since then there have been several falls of very useful rain. Consequently there has been little shortage of feed or water over most of this portion of the Territory. The Arltunga district unfortunately did not receive the same valuable rains as fell elsewhere and conditions in that district were not nearly as satisfactory as was expected.

The prices obtained for fat cattle have fluctuated considerably but the returns have been reasonably good. During the current season the prices have left little cause for complaint. Over 15,000 cattle were exported.

The export of horses, which was formerly an important source of revenue to pastoralists, has fallen off—only 270 having been disposed of during the year and almost all of these were exported in the month of August. Advice has now been promulgated amongst horse breeders that no further remounts for the Indian Army will be required for some years. This will be quite a serious setback for those who have concentrated on the breeding of horses to suit this particular trade.

Sheep-raising has continued on the former scale, the only variation being natural increase and mortality. The price of wool is lower than was hoped for and consequently those engaged in this section of the pastoral industry have not had as good a year as those engaged in cattle-raising. In some instances, the wool clip has been withheld from sale in the hope of obtaining better prices at a later date.

The improvement of herds has been continued and during the year 67 bulls, 1 stallion and 29 rams have been imported. The assistance made available by the Government in paying half the cost of freight on blood stock has been availed of and has been of considerable value to the industry. The rebate of 20 per cent. in freight on cattle exported, which came into operation in June of this year, has been greatly appreciated by those engaged in the industry and will mean a considerable difference in their financial position. It is hoped that this will encourage the improvement of properties.

The work of improving stock routes has been continued. On the main north-south route many of the wells have been equipped with windmills and in some instances the storage capacity has been increased. Additional water supplies have been obtained thus reducing the distance between waters.

The Arltunga stock route has been improved by the provision of two bores.

A more or less direct route between Alice Springs and Napperby has been opened up and this will serve the district to the north-west of Alice Springs.

A route to serve the district north-east of Alice Springs was investigated during the year and it is hoped that funds will be made available during the coming year to have a route opened up. In the past settlers in this district have had to rely on those whose land was traversed to provide water for their travelling stock but the time has now come when water is not available for travelling stock from station supplies.

## POLICE.

With the increase of population on the various mining fields it was found necessary during the year to establish police camps at Hatches Creek and Wauchope Creek. These camps are of a temporary nature only but it is intended to maintain them as long as is warranted by circumstances. Experience has proved that these wolfram fields are only worked intermittently and when prices are high and it is only when the fields are being worked on a reasonably large scale that police control is necessary. It was therefore deemed advisable to establish temporary camps only.

Effective control has been maintained throughout this portion of the Territory during the year and all breaches of the peace have been promptly dealt with.

Efforts to obtain a supply of water in the Coniston District suitable for the establishment of a Police Station have so far proved unsuccessful and the project has been temporarily abandoned. The building material which was obtained for this station has been diverted to the Finke Railway Siding where a Police Station is at present under construction. This will replace the Charlotte Waters Police Station which is in a very bad state of repair and which is in a far less suitable situation.

The site for another police station in the south-western district was investigated. A suitable water supply is available at Illamurta and a track to that locality has been cleared.

Police Officers have performed their duties very satisfactorily throughout the year.

## STAFF.

The staff in this portion of the Territory have performed their duties in a very conscientious and satisfactory manner.

V. G. CARRINGTON,  
District Officer,  
Alice Springs.

## REPORT OF THE CHIEF PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINALS.

## LEGISLATION.

During the year the *Aboriginals Ordinance* 1918-1937 was amended by the insertion of the following section :—

“60A. Where any aboriginal is charged before a Court with the commission of an offence whether punishable on indictment or summarily any aboriginal man or woman who, at the time of the commission of the offence, was living with the aboriginal as the husband, wife or consort of the aboriginal shall not be compellable to give evidence either for or against the aboriginal so charged.”

This amendment prevents the calling by subpoena of a lubra to give evidence against her husband ; a practice hitherto deemed to be unjust and opposed to the principle of aboriginal protection.

## METHYLATED SPIRIT ORDINANCE.

A further amendment to the Methylated Spirit Ordinance was gazetted. This new legislation makes it an offence for an aboriginal to have methylated spirit in his possession. This enactment will assist this Branch in its efforts to suppress the drinking of methylated spirit by aboriginals—a degrading and pernicious practice which has been introduced in recent years.



## RESERVES.

By a notice which was published in the *Commonwealth Gazette* of 11th March, 1938, an area of land in the reserve for aborigines at Groote Eylandt was made available for the purposes of a Flying Boat Base for aircraft engaged in the recently inaugurated service between England and Australia. The area in question was excluded from the reserve and was subsequently proclaimed a prohibited area for aborigines.

The Chief Protector of Aborigines and Chief Medical Officer inspected the site of the proposed Flying Boat Base early last year, and submitted his report to the Administrator. This preliminary report contained definite recommendations concerning—

- (1) The sanitation of the site.
- (2) The protection of the white population to be stationed there from endemic diseases.
- (3) The protection of the aboriginal population from introduced diseases.
- (4) The preservation of the local myall aboriginal from the impact of white civilization.

These recommendations were adopted by responsible Departments.

The Chief Protector paid another visit to the Base later in the year, to study existing conditions and to report upon the practical application of these recommendations.

During the period of construction, a Protector of Aborigines, who is also a Police Officer, was stationed at the Base. His duties were :—

- (1) To prevent aborigines entering the prohibited area near the Base.
- (2) To prevent the migration of members of the construction party on the remainder of the Reserve, except under permit, in which case the Protector was to satisfy himself that the permit did not facilitate contact or intercourse between workmen and the native inhabitants.

As native tribes on the Reserve had, prior to the establishment of the Base, been little influenced by white civilization, the Aboriginal Branch took all precautions to prevent workmen making contact with them. Other stringent prohibitions were :—

- (1) Bartering of curios, game, &c., between the workmen and aborigines.
- (2) The introduction of the tobacco habit.
- (3) The carrying of live-stock on the settlement.

It was decided that the prohibitions imposed during the construction stage should continue after the workmen had left the Base.

The Chief Protector suggested that the Groote Eylandt Mission should be assisted by the Administration to enable it to carry stock sufficient to supply meat and milk to the small community who will be permanently residing at the Base.

## CONTROL BASES—ARNHEM LAND RESERVE.

Mention was made in last year's report of the publicity given to the illicit relationships between the crews of pearling vessels and aboriginal women on aboriginal reserves and elsewhere and the complications which were introduced by alien pearl-fishers when they commenced operations near the Arnhem Land coastline. Recommendations were submitted last year to minimize contact between the aborigines and Japanese. Included in these recommendations was the proposal to appoint control officers at selected locations on the Arnhem Land Reserve.

Two control officers, accompanied by an officer of the Aboriginal Branch, departed from Darwin by motor launch on 6th October, 1937, to establish bases at King River and Elcho Island respectively. The party arrived at King River on 10th October and, after establishing a base there, proceeded to Elcho Island, which was reached on 15th October.

Wireless transmitting sets were installed at both bases to enable the control officers to communicate with Darwin. A small motor craft and dinghies were also provided.

The general purpose of these appointments was to ensure that the idle time between neap tides should be spent by licensed pearling crews at these bases under the supervision of the control officer, thus preventing interference with aborigines and trespass at unauthorized points upon the Reserve.

At the conclusion of the 1937 pearling season it was decided to close the King River Base and, in consequence, the officer-in-charge was recalled to Darwin. The base, however, was reopened again in May 1938; with the commencement of the new season.

A report received early in the year indicated that pearling operations might be transferred to beds situated near Bathurst Island, and a recommendation was submitted that the Control Officer at King River should be rendered mobile in order to facilitate the exercise of supervision on both Bathurst Island and Arnhem Land Reserves.

It is considered that the Control Officers' appointments were justified by the measure of control they achieved over local vessels which operated in the Arnhem Land Reserve Area during the period under review.

Dr. Thomson concluded his investigations in the Arnhem Land Reserve and submitted his final report to the Minister for the Interior. A copy of this report has not yet been supplied to this Branch.

With the exception of marine patrols by the *Larrakia* no other important patrols were undertaken during the year.

An important document was received during the year, in which it was advocated that Aboriginal Reserves in the Northern Territory should be developed by the creation of settlements for aborigines and control vested in a Board of Trustees. The Aboriginal Branch is in accord with the proposal inasmuch as it agrees that it is possible to adapt the Australian aboriginal to a settled life. This objective forms the basis of the new long-range policy submitted to the Department of the Interior in October, 1935, which was subsequently approved by the Minister. The conviction of the ultimate possibility of adapting the aboriginal to the conditions of western civilization is held by the Northern Territory Administration, notwithstanding advice to the contrary from certain anthropologists.

The development of the policy is affected by the variable conditions under which aborigines are living at the present time. It would not be practicable, at this stage, to commence its application in full to the uncivilized aborigines living on reserves. These reserves are therefore regarded as refuges or sanctuaries of a temporary nature. The aboriginal may here continue his normal existence until the time is ripe for his further development.

In the meantime, areas, such as the new compound at Darwin and the cattle station at Mataranka, have been set aside for the purpose of development by detribalized aborigines, whom it is so hoped to educate and train into a peasant community. The Crown Lands Ordinance empowers the Governor-General to make grants of land to aborigines and there is no shortage of such land outside aboriginal reserves were any native at the moment capable of undertaking its development.

The very nature, distribution and dispersion of the aboriginal population in the Territory render the control of reserves or other settlements by a Trust impracticable. The long reserve frontages, their remoteness from white settlement and the difficulties of patrolling them, make this activity definitely a function of Government. The development of the Territory, in the course of years, may eventually be such as to make it desirable for the Government to surrender this function, but this stage has definitely not yet been reached.

The reserves in the Territory are of very variable type. The larger ones, for example, the Arnhem Land Reserve and the South-west Reserve, are inhabited by a scattered population of uncivilized aboriginals, preserved from contact with western civilization by regular patrols. On the other hand, there are reserves in the vicinity of townships, like the Alice Springs camp reserve and the Darwin Compound reserve, which are set aside for the use of detribalized natives, and which are managed in the interests of the natives by officers of the Government. On all managed reserves provision for accommodation, water supply, sanitation and so forth is undertaken by the Chief Protector. On reserves for the uncivilized aboriginal such provision is not generally necessary. There have, however, been occasions when the sinking of wells has proved desirable and improvements of this nature have been made by the Government in certain localities in the dry interior. The provision of additional sources of water supply in the South-west Reserve is under consideration but, for the most part, water supplies on reserves are ample for the purpose.

On controlled reserves, aboriginals are already employed and earning revenue in the rendering of services to the Government, the felling and distribution of firewood and, in Darwin, the maintenance of a public laundry. In the South-west Reserve arrangements are being made for the control of the marketing of dingo scalps in the interests of the aboriginal. It is proposed to extend the activities of aboriginal settlements in the direction of agriculture, market gardening, buffalo-shooting, timber-getting and dressing, pearl-shelling and trepang collection and marketing. It is also proposed to give particular attention to the training of natives for their employment as chauffeurs, domestic servants and so forth and all natives will be educated under the Public School curriculum.

A source of revenue to the benefit of the aboriginal is already in operation; namely the Aboriginal Medical Benefit Fund, to which all employers of aboriginal labour are required to contribute annually a sum fixed in proportion to the number of aboriginals employed. This Fund is devoted to the provision of medical aid, ambulance transport and hospitalization for aboriginals.

Offers have been received from various enterprises, at different times, to pay royalties in exchange for a permit to enter upon, and exploit the resources of, aboriginal reserves. The industries concerned have been mining, buffalo-shooting and trepanging. These have been disallowed in conformance with the policy of keeping these reserves as sanctuaries. It is considered desirable rather to permit aboriginals to reach a stage where they can develop these activities themselves for their full profit and benefit.

#### EXEMPTION FROM ABORIGINALS ORDINANCE.

Ten male half-castes and eight female half-castes were granted exemption from the provisions of the Aboriginals Ordinance. Unfavorable police reports received concerning two male half-castes, who were exempted last year, caused the Chief Protector to revoke their exemptions.

#### ABORIGINAL MEDICAL BENEFIT FUND.

Employers' contributions amounted to £895 1s. 10d. as compared with £776 13s. 9d. for the previous year. Station managements who applied to the Chief Protector were supplied with medicine chests for their aboriginal employees.

The medical officers at Alice Springs and Katherine conducted regular medical inspections of aboriginals residing on pastoral holdings and Mission Stations.

Considerable expenditure was incurred in connexion with the hospitalization of aboriginals employed in districts adjacent to the borders of Queensland. Patients from these areas were treated at the Camooweal, Mount Isa and Tennant Creek Hospitals. A number of aboriginals received medical attention at the Wyndham Hospital.

The temporary Lock Hospital for half-caste women at the Quarantine Station last year was transferred to the Bagot Compound where the patients were housed in tents pending the erection of the isolation wards of the new Darwin Hospital which were expected to be completed early in the year.

#### ABORIGINAL TRUST ACCOUNT, DARWIN.

|                                      | £     | s. | d. |
|--------------------------------------|-------|----|----|
| Credit balance as at 1st July, 1938  | ..    | .. | .. |
| Credits during the year 1937-38      | ..    | .. | .. |
| Debits during the year 1937-38       | ..    | .. | .. |
| Credit balance as at 30th June, 1938 | ..    | .. | .. |
|                                      | 4,115 | 7  | 8  |
|                                      | 6,902 | 7  | 5  |
|                                      | 5,480 | 7  | 7  |
|                                      | 5,537 | 7  | 6  |

Cash Orders numbering 1,950 to a total value of £3,181 7s. 8d. were issued. Orders for goods to the number of 1,225 were issued for a total sum of £2,263 2s. 7d. These figures exclude remuneration paid in kind to aboriginals employed on stations and by contract drovers.

#### ABORIGINAL TRUST ACCOUNT, ALICE SPRINGS.

|                                      | £     | s. | d. |
|--------------------------------------|-------|----|----|
| Credit balance as at 1st July, 1938  | ..    | .. | .. |
| Credits during the year 1937-38      | ..    | .. | .. |
| Debits during the year 1937-38       | ..    | .. | .. |
| Credit balance as at 30th June, 1938 | ..    | .. | .. |
|                                      | 739   | 2  | 10 |
|                                      | 2,445 | 17 | 8  |
|                                      | 1,423 | 14 | 0  |
|                                      | 1,761 | 6  | 6  |

#### EMPLOYMENT.

During the year 252 town licences and 379 country licences were issued. Two hundred and forty seven agreements were entered into by employers of aboriginals and half-castes. Licence issues showed an increase of 92 on figures for last year.

#### AGED AND INFIRM ABORIGINALS.

Regular supplies of rations, clothing and blankets were forwarded to all Depots throughout the year. There was a slight increase in the number of natives rationed. Reports received from distributing depots indicated that supplies were adequate and that the natives were contented.

It is anticipated that the transfer of indigent natives at the Alice Springs centre to a Depot at Jay Creek will be effected early in the next financial year.

Replenishments of bush medicine chests were sent regularly to all rationing centres.

#### MARRIAGES.

Permission was granted by the Chief Protector of Aborigines for the marriage of nine female half-castes, six with Europeans and three with half-castes. One European was permitted to marry a female aboriginal.

With few exceptions the marriages of female half-castes with Europeans, which have been celebrated during the last six years, have proved eminently successful.

#### ABORIGINAL VOTE.

The net expenditure as per appropriation was—

|                       | £      | s. | d. |
|-----------------------|--------|----|----|
| Darwin .. .. .        | 10,878 | 16 | 0  |
| Alice Springs .. .. . | 4,247  | 19 | 6  |

These figures do not include amounts paid as subsidies to Missions, salaries of staff, cost of erection of buildings, repairs and maintenance, &c. No charge is made against the Aboriginal Vote for the hospitalization of aborigines in hospitals in the Northern Territory.

#### KAHLIN COMPOUND, BAGOT COMPOUND, DARWIN.

To permit the erection of two isolation wards for the new Darwin Hospital it was found necessary at short notice to transfer the native compound from Kahlin Beach to Bagot Reserve.

Temporary buildings, including a kitchen, dormitories, storerooms, garages and a clinic were erected at the Bagot Compound by half-caste labour from second-hand material provided by the Works Department.

The transfer of clinic patients was effected in December. In May, 1938, the remainder of the aboriginal inmates were transferred to the Bagot Compound. Immediately after their removal all buildings which previously housed aborigines at the Kahlin Compound, were demolished.

Last year the Chief Protector of Aborigines conferred with the Senior Architect of the Works and Services Branch regarding details of the new building programme of the Bagot Compound which will involve an expenditure of £38,000. Plans of the buildings were subsequently approved. Tenders were called during the year, and it is expected that the contractor will commence building operations early in the new financial year.

Much adverse criticism has been directed against the erection of the Bagot Compound on its present site—critics advancing as reasons—

- (1) That the compound will attract large numbers of natives to Darwin.
- (2) That the site should have been far removed from the town centre.

Previous reports of this Branch contain full information concerning the functions of this new compound, which include the segregation and treatment of aborigines suffering from contagious diseases. These patients will be housed in modern isolation blocks in which they will be segregated from the aboriginal population of the Northern Territory until cured. It is imperative, for reasons that are obvious, that such a treatment centre should be located in close proximity to Darwin.

Experienced officers of the Aboriginal Branch contend, after long years of observation and investigation, that the Bagot Compound will not encourage a drift of the aboriginal population to Darwin. On the contrary it will facilitate effective control of the present aboriginal population who, in the absence of proper facilities for their segregation and housing in a selected locality, are at present residing in insanitary camps situated on beaches and in the bush in and around Darwin.

During the year complaints were received from interested persons that aborigines were migrating from the various reserves to Darwin. Investigation revealed that most of the aborigines had previously visited Darwin as crews of luggers and mission boats, and despite the fact that food and housing were available for them in the compound very few of them repaired there voluntarily. Considerable difficulty was experienced in controlling these migrants, although many of them were compelled to reside in the Kahlin Compound. Control of this class of aboriginal will be made possible at the Bagot Compound to the extent that they can be held there until their repatriation to Reserves can be effected. This action is not possible without the proper facilities which the Bagot Compound will provide.

An analysis of the permanent aboriginal population of Darwin reveals that some 300 aborigines are thoroughly detribalized and have resided in and around Darwin for periods varying from ten to fifteen years. Their long contact with civilization has bred in them a strong inclination not to return to their tribal areas, many of which are situated within a few miles from the town centre. Great difficulty would attend their removal to other aboriginal reserves, there to mingle with semi-civilized aborigines of alien tribes. The Bagot Compound has been established for the purpose of meeting this problem.

Experienced observers are of the opinion that much of the criticism levelled against the Bagot Compound has been based on information supplied by misinformed and inexperienced persons.

A teacher for the native school was appointed during the year and arrangements were finalized for a school for aboriginal children, to commence early in the financial year. It is anticipated that some 80 children will attend within the course of the next few months.

During the year all permits for aborigines to sleep on premises were cancelled and all aborigines employed in Darwin were compelled to return to the compound to sleep.

Transport to and from the compound was effected by motor trucks. It was found necessary to augment this transport service by the purchase of two additional vehicles, which will also be engaged in other cartage and haulage work for the Administration.

During the year a large amount of preliminary work, including road-making and clearing of areas for building and cultivation plots, was carried out at the Bagot Compound. It is anticipated that when the new building programme is completed many of the industrial undertakings proposed to be instituted will be successfully operating.

#### Canteen.

The compound canteen has a credit balance of £583 8s. 1d.

#### Laundry.

Profits from this enterprise amounted to £298 0s. 7d., all of which was shared by the laundresses.

*Half-castes.*

The total number of half-castes in Government institutions at 30th June, 1938, was 111 males and 169 females—a total of 280, as compared with 279 at 30th June, 1937.

## HALF-CASTE HOME, DARWIN.

The number of inmates under direct control at Darwin at 30th June, 1938, were as follow :—

|   | Males.    | Females.   | Total.     |
|---|-----------|------------|------------|
| Half-caste children in Half-caste Homes .. ..   | 18        | 62         | 80         |
| Adult half-castes .. ..                         | 13        | 36 (a)     | 49         |
| Nurselings living with aboriginal mothers .. .. | 1         | 1          | 2          |
| Half-castes residing with employers .. ..       | ..        | 22         | 22         |
| <b>Total .. ..</b>                              | <b>32</b> | <b>121</b> | <b>153</b> |

(a) Includes inmates of Lock Hospital.

The erection of a new half-caste home for girls is now an urgent necessity and it is anticipated that a new building will be erected on a site situated in a rural centre.

## HALF-CASTE HOME, ALICE SPRINGS.

The total number of inmates at 30th June, 1938, was 127, comprising 79 males and 48 females. Admissions during the year numbered 34. Forty inmates were discharged—of these eleven half-caste boys were found employment in the cattle-raising industry.

Consideration was given to a proposal that a new half-caste home should be built at Alice Springs, as the present accommodation is inadequate.

## HALF-CASTE HOUSING SCHEME.

Twelve houses have now been erected under this scheme. Four new dwellings, which are an improvement on the old type of home, were completed during the year.

The owner-tenants have to-day effected many improvements, including fencing, painting, and the sinking of wells on various properties.

C. E. COOK,  
Chief Protector of Aboriginals.

## LIST OF CONVICTIONS RECORDED AGAINST HALF-CASTES AND ABORIGINALS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1938.

|                                       | Half-castes. |          | Aboriginals. |          | Total.     |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|------------|
|                                       | Males.       | Females. | Males.       | Females. |            |
| Aboriginals Ordinance .. ..           | 31           | 4        | 89           | 17       | 141        |
| Assault .. ..                         | 1            | 1        | 11           | ..       | 13         |
| Dangerous Drugs Ordinance .. ..       | ..           | ..       | 17           | 5        | 22         |
| Drunkenness .. ..                     | 3            | ..       | ..           | ..       | 3          |
| Firearms Ordinance .. ..              | 1            | ..       | ..           | ..       | 1          |
| Indecent behaviour and language .. .. | 2            | 2        | 5            | 1        | 10         |
| Methylated Spirit Ordinance .. ..     | ..           | ..       | 25           | 8        | 33         |
| Resisting and hindering Police .. ..  | 1            | 1        | 1            | ..       | 3          |
| Unlawful possession .. ..             | ..           | ..       | 13           | 2        | 15         |
| Unlawfully on premises .. ..          | ..           | ..       | 2            | ..       | 2          |
| Vagrancy .. ..                        | 1            | ..       | ..           | ..       | 1          |
| V.D. Ordinance .. ..                  | ..           | 1        | ..           | ..       | 1          |
|                                       |              |          |              |          | <b>245</b> |

## LIST OF CONVICTIONS OF HALF-CASTES AND ABORIGINALS IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1938.

|  | Half-castes. |          | Aboriginals. |          | Total.   |
|--|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|----------|
|  | Males.       | Females. | Males.       | Females. |          |
| Assault with intent to commit rape .. .. | ..           | ..       | 1            | ..       | 1        |
| Assault occasioning bodily harm .. ..    | ..           | ..       | ..           | 1        | 1        |
| Bestiality .. ..                         | ..           | ..       | 1            | ..       | 1        |
| Carnal knowledge .. ..                   | ..           | ..       | 1            | ..       | 1        |
| Murder .. ..                             | ..           | ..       | 2            | ..       | 2        |
| Wounding with intent .. ..               | ..           | ..       | 1            | ..       | 1        |
|  |              |          |              |          | <b>7</b> |

There was a slight increase in the number of minor crimes committed during the year. Of the 245 misdemeanours recorded, 180 constitute breaches of the prohibited area and liquor provisions of the Aboriginals Ordinance.

Three of the major cases heard in the Supreme Court were sexual crimes, which were given considerable publicity. The frequency of this class of offence is unusual. Hitherto, the aboriginal population has enjoyed a practically unblemished record in this respect. Investigation revealed that two of the offenders were abnormal types, who will be given reformatory treatment on their discharge from gaol.

The drinking of methylated spirit by aboriginals was again prevalent, but increased vigilance by Protectors is successfully combatting the evil.

Certain special inquiries were conducted by the patrol officer, Alice Springs, and in some cases the aboriginal offenders were subsequently arrested and charged before the Police Court. In other cases no definite action was taken for reasons that the petty misdemeanours so reported were influenced by tribal customs.

### ABORIGINAL CENSUS OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.

YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1938.

#### Summary.

| District.               | Full Bloods. |          |           |          | Half-castes. |          |           |          | Total. |
|-------------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------|-----------|----------|--------|
|                         | Adults.      |          | Children. |          | Adults.      |          | Children. |          |        |
|                         | Males.       | Females. | Males.    | Females. | Males.       | Females. | Males.    | Females. |        |
| Alice Springs .. ..     | 159          | 158      | 52        | 48       | 17           | 43       | 96        | 43       | 616    |
| Arltunga .. ..          | 148          | 136      | 46        | 37       | 11           | 9        | 6         | 5        | 398    |
| Anthony Lagoon .. ..    | 71           | 54       | 15        | 16       | 4            | 3        | 2         | 1        | 166    |
| Barrow Creek .. ..      | 176          | 120      | 38        | 40       | 26           | 12       | 10        | 14       | 436    |
| Borrooloola .. ..       | 301          | 282      | 88        | 80       | 10           | 9        | 13        | 11       | 794    |
| Brooks Creek .. ..      | 94           | 47       | 22        | 20       | 10           | 6        | ..        | ..       | 199    |
| Charlotte Waters .. ..  | 172          | 122      | 51        | 37       | 8            | 3        | 3         | 2        | 398    |
| Daly River .. ..        | 620          | 318      | 119       | 88       | 6            | 5        | 2         | 2        | 1,160  |
| Darwin .. ..            | 1,457        | 1,113    | 300       | 314      | 74           | 102      | 63        | 82       | 3,505  |
| Katherine .. ..         | 119          | 92       | 45        | 31       | 4            | 3        | 2         | 8        | 304    |
| Lake Nash .. ..         | 62           | 23       | 18        | 17       | 5            | ..       | ..        | ..       | 125    |
| Maranboy .. ..          | 230          | 211      | 34        | 42       | 8            | 3        | ..        | ..       | 528    |
| North-West Patrol .. .. | 217          | 262      | 97        | 113      | 10           | ..       | ..        | ..       | 699    |
| Newcastle Waters .. ..  | 140          | 142      | 41        | 37       | 6            | 9        | 6         | 4        | 385    |
| Pine Creek .. ..        | 55           | 43       | 7         | 8        | 6            | 5        | ..        | ..       | 124    |
| Rankine River .. ..     | 78           | 38       | 16        | 19       | 7            | 3        | 2         | 4        | 167    |
| Roper River .. ..       | 660          | 605      | 295       | 260      | 12           | 9        | 8         | 7        | 1,856  |
| South-West Patrol .. .. | 274          | 332      | 110       | 129      | 7            | 3        | ..        | 2        | 857    |
| Timber Creek .. ..      | 743          | 310      | 154       | 138      | 30           | 1        | 1         | ..       | 1,377  |
| Wave Hill .. ..         | 455          | 312      | 55        | 60       | 2            | 3        | 3         | ..       | 890    |
| Hermannsburg .. ..      | 93           | 72       | 48        | 53       | 1            | 6        | 1         | 3        | 277    |
| Totals .. ..            | 6,324        | 4,792    | 1,651     | 1,587    | 264          | 237      | 218       | 188      | 15,261 |

| District.               | Nomadic. |          | In Regular Employment in Supervised Camps. |          | In Regular Employment not in Supervised Camps. |          | In Supervised Camps. |          | Others. |          | Total. |          |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|--|----------|--|----------|----------------------|----------|---------|----------|--------|----------|
|                         | Males.   | Females. | Males.                                     | Females. | Males.   | Females. | Males.               | Females. | Males.  | Females. | Males. | Females. |
| Alice Springs .. ..     | 35       | 25       | 62   | 61       | 17   | 21       | 210                  | 176      | ..      | 9        | 324    | 292      |
| Arltunga .. ..          | 138      | 169      | 73   | 18       | ..   | ..       | ..                   | ..       | ..      | ..       | 211    | 187      |
| Anthony Lagoon .. ..    | 18       | 26       | 53   | 11       | ..   | ..       | 15                   | 33       | 6       | 4        | 92     | 74       |
| Barrow Creek .. ..      | 81       | 74       | 89   | 30       | ..   | ..       | 80                   | 82       | ..      | ..       | 250    | 186      |
| Borrooloola .. ..       | 196      | 176      | 87   | 9        | ..   | ..       | 116                  | 186      | 13      | 11       | 412    | 382      |
| Brooks Creek .. ..      | 73       | 50       | ..   | ..       | 53   | 23       | ..                   | ..       | ..      | ..       | 126    | 73       |
| Charlotte Waters .. ..  | 85       | 65       | 43   | 18       | ..   | ..       | 76                   | 60       | 30      | 21       | 234    | 164      |
| Daly River .. ..        | 380      | 190      | 77   | 23       | 100  | 50       | 190                  | 150      | ..      | ..       | 747    | 413      |
| Darwin .. ..            | 756      | 540      | 496  | 340      | 182  | 80       | 430                  | 585      | 30      | 66       | 1,894  | 1,611    |
| Katherine .. ..         | 50       | 41       | ..   | ..       | 68   | 47       | 52                   | 46       | ..      | ..       | 170    | 134      |
| Lake Nash .. ..         | 28       | 29       | 8  | 4        | 45   | ..       | ..                   | ..       | 4       | 7        | 85     | 40       |
| Maranboy .. ..          | 100      | 122      | 58   | 13       | 20   | ..       | 79                   | 102      | 15      | 19       | 272    | 256      |
| North-West Patrol .. .. | 155      | 195      | 50   | 15       | 10   | ..       | 109                  | 165      | ..      | ..       | 324    | 375      |
| Newcastle Waters .. ..  | 1        | 1        | 57   | 13       | 12   | 13       | 123                  | 165      | ..      | ..       | 193    | 192      |
| Pine Creek .. ..        | 27       | 26       | 11   | 10       | 30   | 20       | ..                   | ..       | ..      | ..       | 68     | 56       |
| Rankine River .. ..     | ..       | ..       | 65   | 22       | ..   | ..       | 38                   | 42       | ..      | ..       | 103    | 64       |
| Roper River .. ..       | 775      | 765      | 82   | 59       | 70   | 25       | 48                   | 32       | ..      | ..       | 975    | 881      |
| South-West Patrol .. .. | 235      | 265      | 36   | 29       | 7  | 5        | 113                  | 167      | ..      | ..       | 391    | 466      |
| Timber Creek .. ..      | 626      | 316      | 277  | 113      | ..   | ..       | 25                   | 20       | ..      | ..       | 928    | 449      |
| Wave Hill .. ..         | 280      | 230      | 132  | 32       | ..   | ..       | 103                  | 113      | ..      | ..       | 515    | 375      |
| Hermannsburg .. ..      | 7        | 1        | 55   | 41       | ..   | ..       | 79                   | 91       | 2       | 1        | 143    | 134      |
| Totals .. ..            | 4,046    | 3,306    | 1,811                                      | 861      | 614  | 284      | 1,886                | 2,215    | 100     | 138      | 8,457  | 6,804    |