

1948-49.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

---

REPORT

ON THE

ADMINISTRATION

OF

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

FOR

YEAR 1947-48.

---

*Presented by Command, 5th October, 1949; ordered to be printed, 27th October, 1949.*

---

*Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; 693 copies; approximate cost of printing and publishing £32.]*

---

Printed and Published for the GOVERNMENT of the COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA by  
L. F. JOHNSTON, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra.  
(Printed in Australia.)

No. 92 [GROUP G].—F.2249.—PRICE 1s. 6d.

## CONTENTS.

---

### REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR.

	PAGE.
1. Introductory .. .. .	3
2. General Statistics .. .. .	7
3. Police .. .. .	8
4. Municipal and Housing .. .. .	8
5. Lands and Surveys .. .. .	9
6. Animal Industry .. .. .	11
7. Mining .. .. .	15
8. Native Affairs .. .. .	18
9. Education .. .. .	21
10. Patrol Service .. .. .	25
11. Pearling .. .. .	25
12. Road-Rail Transport Service .. .. .	25
13. Conclusions .. .. .	25

The No. 1 Government Battery commenced operations on 15th November, 1947, and after treating 1,556 tons of ore, was closed on 18th June, 1948. No. 3 Government Battery operated throughout the year, treating 28 parcels of ore with a total tonnage of 5,699 tons.

No serious mechanical difficulties were encountered during the year, although a great deal of trouble was experienced with the supply of water to all batteries. The bores supplying water to both batteries at Tennant Creek are the source of much annoyance, but I trust that this trouble will be obviated when the battery is connected to the Ghan's water supply scheme. The water supply for the Maranboy Battery will be improved once the new engine is installed.

#### OIL AND COAL.

The Australian Mining and Smelting Company continued the geological examination of the area in the north-western portion of the Northern Territory.

A coal deposit was reported from a bore put down on Eva Downs Station and it is intended to diamond drill this area during the forthcoming year.

#### 8. NATIVE AFFAIRS.

My last year's report laid stress on the problems concerning the Native Affairs Branch as a result of the disruptive influence of the war period and Army occupation. I am pleased to report now that there has been a diminution of the unrest previously manifest amongst the aboriginal population. I can now see my way clear to further improve this position by concentration on the subjects mentioned hereunder :—

The drift of the aboriginals into towns will be further controlled.

Water will be supplied where required on aboriginal reserves.

The reserves will be made habitable and more attractive to the inhabitants.

Government Stations will be established in suitable areas with a view to training aboriginals in crafts and industries. This will enable aboriginals to take a part in the industrial life of the Territory, eventually assisting them in developing the resources of their own reserves.

Co-operation with the Department of Health in order to give to the aboriginals adequate medical treatment.

Assistance will be provided to Mission Societies to enable them to introduce and develop economic pursuits in order to train aboriginals under their influence.

Missions will, at all times, pursue the policy laid down by the Native Affairs Branch.

Action has been taken to fill a number of the new positions created by the Public Service Board in this Branch, but the finalizing of the appointments is still awaited. The Branch has been forced to carry on with a skeleton organization, containing a number of temporary employees. It must be recognized that the approved establishment, mentioned in my last report, is the minimum with which the Branch can function satisfactorily.

Patrol Officer Sweeney returned from his course at the Sydney University in September, 1947. He passed through his course with credit, and I am now quite sure that the efficiency of all patrol officers will be improved by their attendance at the University under the expert guidance of Professor Elkin.

Patrol Officers T. Evans, S. Kyle-Little and L. Penhall are attending the course at the present time, having commenced in March, 1948.

The education of the aboriginal is still presenting a problem. Apart from the efforts being made by Mission Stations, I am afraid that very little has been achieved to further the education of full-blood aboriginals. I had hoped that teachers might be obtainable from the South Australian Education Department, but this now will not be so, and I am concerned because Government policy is that the full-blood aboriginal will be educated in his own school. This means, then, the complete new set-up of schools in settlements and on reserves, staffed by trained teachers in order that this educational scheme should be proceeded with. At the present time I hope that an education officer will be appointed to the Commonwealth Office of Education to examine the importance of aboriginal education in order to advise on curricula and the training of teachers wherever and whenever desired.

I do trust that this scheme can be put into operation during the coming year, although I have my very grave doubts as to whether we will be much further towards the successful completion of this idea. We must be able to receive our teachers for aboriginal education fully trained and prepared to serve for some years.

Construction of necessary dwellings, hostels and stores, &c., on settlements and reserves has presented a very real problem. I have now arranged that the Native Affairs Branch will proceed with its own building programme, using its own labour, under the guidance of the Department of Works and Housing engineers. This has been accepted and now all our outback work is being put in hand by this Branch as soon as materials become available.

#### LEGISLATION.

Regulations to control the employment of aboriginals in mines were notified on 18th September, 1947. There have been no other changes of legislation affecting the aboriginal during the year. A close examination has been made of the present Aboriginals Ordinance and a revision of this Ordinance and Regulations is in course of preparation. Draft Regulations to provide for the establishment of Courts for the Native Affairs Branch are being prepared. All legislation dealing with aboriginals must be approved by the Minister before being discussed, or finalized, by the Legislative Council, and such legislation must await the Governor-General's assent before becoming law.

#### ABORIGINAL RESERVES.

The Catfish Reserve, approved last year, has now become an established fact and this reserve will become the home of the desert natives from the Tanami Granites region. The reserve will be developed as a pastoral holding.

Two additional aboriginal reserves have been created, firstly an area of approximately 200 square miles adjoining the southern boundary of the Daly River Reserve, and an area at Berrimah, about nine miles from Darwin. The larger reserve will enable the Port Keats Mission to extend their pastoral activities, whilst the Berrimah Reserve will be utilized for the accommodation of aboriginals employed in the Darwin area.

Extensive examination of the country between Tennant Creek and Banka Banka was carried out during the year in order to locate an area suitable for development for the use of the aboriginals at present temporarily domiciled at Phillips Creek. Investigations indicate that an area of 200 square miles will be available and this is being held pending trial boring for water.

The Humbert River Aboriginal Reserve, held for a number of years under grazing licence, has now been revoked, as the Catfish Reserve will provide for the needs of aboriginals in this portion of the Territory.

Uninhabited Truant Island, about 30 miles off the extreme north-east coast of Arnhem Land has been excised from the reserve for use as a potential pearling base and should this pearling base be utilized, suitable arrangements are already in hand to provide proper supervision to prevent any undesirable contact between aboriginals and pearling fleets.

#### EMPLOYMENT.

There has been a keen demand for aboriginal employees throughout the whole of the Territory, pastoral employment continuing to be the most attractive. Employers have now accepted a keener responsibility for the welfare of the aboriginal, but it is unfortunate that the promulgation of regulations controlling conditions within the pastoral industry has been delayed. I will do everything possible to introduce these regulations during the coming year. The demand for aboriginal labour for urban employment slightly exceeds the supply, and this is natural because the aboriginal has endeavoured to seek a better class of employment than this menial one. There will always be, however, a certain number of aboriginals who can only perform this type of employment, so I do not anticipate any great trouble with this supply and demand problem.

#### MISSIONS.

The half-caste children at the Mulgoa Church of England Half-caste Home in New South Wales have been the subject of some discussion. At the present time the intention is to have these children looked after by the Australian Board of Missions instead of the Church Missionary Society, and as soon as finalization can be arrived at between these two Mission authorities, the transfer of the children back from Mulgoa to Alice Springs will be completed.

The St. Mary's Church of England Hostel at Alice Springs continues to do very good work, and Deaconess Heath is to be congratulated on her control of the children and their appearance as well as their intelligent appreciation of school.

All missionary bodies working amongst the aboriginals in the Northern Territory are striving to fulfill their responsibilities. Their financial burden is heavy and they are faced with staff difficulties. Notwithstanding all obstacles, as a result of the genuine efforts being made, improvement is evident. The full co-operation of the personnel is afforded to the Native Affairs Branch.

A feature of the progress which has been made is the emphasis which all societies have placed on child welfare. A trained nurse is provided for each station and as a result of their efforts infant mortality has been greatly reduced. Proper hospital treatment is now provided and treatment of a patient amongst his own people is more acceptable to him than being taken to hospital in a strange area. Now only the most serious cases call for evacuation.

Schooling is provided for the children and trained teachers are being recruited. As yet no standard curriculum is being used.

The development of economic pursuits has received greater attention than formerly and a ready sale exists for good quality articles manufactured on mission stations.

#### NATIVE SETTLEMENTS.

The year has been one of gradual development on all settlements, and there is evidence that settlement life is becoming more acceptable to the aboriginal.

*Beswick.*—The movement of the aboriginal population from King River Settlement to Beswick Station was completed this year. A busy year was experienced in mustering cattle and planning development. The necessary fencing of additional paddocks has begun and is nearing completion. In addition to providing beef for the aboriginals now resident on Beswick, two lots of cattle were sold for export and a mob transferred to Delissaville Settlement. Gardening has been most successful and an ample supply of fresh vegetables is always available. An air-strip has been completed and has proved of great value in urgent medical cases. A portion of Mataranka Station was surrendered for attachment to Beswick Station and a part of the previous Veldt Station has been taken over.

*Delissaville.*—The inhabitants have continued building and they are now all housed. Considerable fencing, stock and slaughter yards have been erected and the cattle from Beswick Station are now being slaughtered for local consumption. Also this meat is being supplied to aboriginals in the Darwin area. Agriculture is becoming more acceptable to these people, who now produce almost sufficient vegetables for their own requirements. It is intended this coming year to extend still further the vegetable gardens in order that sufficient vegetables can be produced for Native Affairs Branch needs in Darwin.

*Yuendumu.*—Steady progress has been evident here this year and there has been a great improvement in the behaviour of the aboriginals who, in the past, have been prone to indulge in violent disturbances. Gardening has been most successful and a variety of crops is produced. Valuable assistance has been rendered by members of the Baptist Mission, whilst the inhabitants are being encouraged to trade scalps and hides for cash. A store is available on this settlement for purchasing whatever the aboriginal may need. An air-strip has been completed and as well as the flying doctor service, regular mail schedules come into this settlement.

An additional bore will be sunk very shortly, and if this is successful, this coming year will see the establishment of a small cattle herd here.

*Haasts Bluff.*—A water supply is now assured here and all bores are suitably equipped. Four hundred head of cattle have been purchased by the Branch and these breeders will provide the nucleus of a much larger herd. An extensive garden area has been fenced, vegetable production is assured, and there is a small trading store at which the aboriginals may sell hides and scalps for cash or barter.

*Areyonga.*—This settlement is being managed and developed along similar lines to Haasts Bluff. Water raising equipment has been installed and agriculture will now begin. Several aboriginal pastoralists have been established here. The scheme has been made possible by the foresight of the Finke River Mission authorities in providing sufficient credit to enable the pastoralists to commence.

*Jay Creek.*—This settlement continues to act as a buffer between the reserves and the town of Alice Springs. A small number of cattle is kept here, whilst vegetable production is limited. Water supply has been the main cause of worry, three bores already having been sunk without any quantity of water being obtained. Investigations are now being carried out to determine the practicability of constructing a dam in the creek in order to ensure a permanent water supply.

#### PART-ABORIGINALS.

The part-aboriginals are a definite part of the pattern of life in the Northern Territory and follow a variety of occupations. Almost without exception they earn at least award rates of pay and are striving to lead the lives of ordinary citizens. Their general behaviour compares favorably with that of the rest of the community.

Exemptions from the Aborigines Ordinance are granted after satisfactory investigation of the applicants. Two hundred and ninety-three part-aboriginals have been granted full citizenship rights.

Four missionary societies have provided, with government financial aid, the following institutions :—

- Croker Island—Methodist Overseas Mission.
- Garden Point—Roman Catholic Mission.
- Bagot Road—Aborigines Inland Mission.
- St. Mary's Mission, Alice Springs—Australian Board of Missions.

Croker Island and Garden Island are self-contained institutions with their own schools and all facilities. The children attending the other homes are educated at the normal public schools.

The Australian Board of Missions conducts a hostel for boys at Semaphore in South Australia.

#### EXPENDITURE ON ABORIGINAL WELFARE 1947-1948.

	£
Feeding, clothing, transport, hospitalization, &c., for aboriginals at Government Settlements and Reserves, including stock and supply purchases for Beswick .. .. .	45,792
Authorized expenditure for buildings and services on Government Settlements .. .. .	70,160
Payments to Missions for maintenance of and services to aboriginals and half-castes, excluding Child Endowment from Social Services Department .. .. .	2,700
Plant and equipment purchases .. .. .	11,280
Administrative expenses other than salaries .. .. .	4,874
	134,806

NOTE.—Item 2 refers to authorization and not actual expenditure.

### 9. EDUCATION.

Higher primary status was given to the Darwin School in 1948, thereby providing a curriculum in that school up to the Intermediate standard of the University of Adelaide.

Correspondence instruction has been increased and extended to cover Technical subjects, and the demand has been such that serious consideration is now being given to the establishment of technical classes at Alice Springs and Darwin.

In view of the extension of education and the development of educational activities outside the normal school lessons, and the need for a full-time administrative officer, as mentioned in my last report, Mr. L. Dodd, B.A., was appointed Advisory Teacher of Northern Territory Schools on 1st January, 1948. On 4th April, 1948, Mr. Dodd was allotted the additional duty of Assistant Supervisor of Education for the Northern Territory. Mr. Dodd is responsible for the inspection of schools and advisory work amongst teachers in regard to methods of instruction, curriculum and other school matters.

Other important developments affecting educational policy during the year were the institution of Intermediate Exhibits, and Primary School boarding allowances for children resident in areas remote from established schools; the extension of free school transport services at Alice Springs and Darwin; and the payment of subsidies to pre-school kindergartens conforming to certain prescribed standards and conditions. A grant was also provided by the Government for the purchase of a school library and reference books.

Consideration has been given to the important question of the education and training of apprentices, and an Apprentices Bill, designed to establish and regulate the apprenticeship scheme in the Northern Territory, has been drafted and awaits approval.

During the year an official visit to the Northern Territory schools was made by the Minister of Education in South Australia, the Honorable R. J. Rudall, B.Litt., LL.B., M.L.C.