

1935.

(SECOND SESSION.)

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

ABORIGINES.

(ANNUAL REPORT OF BOARD FOR PROTECTION OF, FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1935.)

Printed under No. 11 Report from Printing Committee, 5 December, 1935.

Report of Board for Protection of Aborigines for the Year ended 30th June, 1935.

Office of Board for Protection of Aborigines,
Wembley Chambers, Hunter and Phillip Streets,
Sydney, 13 November, 1935.

The Under Secretary,
Chief Secretary's Department.

Dear Sir,

In accordance with the established practice, we, the undermentioned members of the Board for Protection of Aborigines, duly appointed under the provisions of the Aborigines Protection Act, 1909, have the honour to submit for the Chief Secretary's information the following report of the operations of the Board during the period 1st July, 1934, to 30th June, 1935, together with the usual particulars of the numbers, location, and present condition of the Aborigines throughout the State, and means adopted for their relief as far as the funds at our disposal would permit.

GENERAL.

It is pleasing to note that with returning normal conditions within the general community a considerable improvement is also discernable among Aborigines residing on the Board's Reserves, who have been able to secure a larger share of employment than was the case during the preceding year, and while the Board has, of course, had to assist large numbers of able-bodied men and their families, every advantage has been taken by these men to secure any employment offering within their own districts, thus relieving the Board's ration lists to that extent. As previously pointed out, however, economic conditions have compelled large numbers of people who formerly wholly maintained themselves, to appeal to the Board for help, with a result that the population of most of the Board's Stations and Reserves was considerably augmented, in some cases by Aborigines who had formerly lived under undesirable conditions on the outskirts of towns.

The transfer to Aboriginal Stations has been beneficial not only to the Aborigines themselves, but to the general community, and the Board is hopeful that with an amendment of its Act it will be possible to make further transfers, and thereby abolish groups of insanitary and unsightly shanties which are still occupied by Aborigines outside several centres such as Armidale, Moree, Lismore, and other towns.

ABORIGINAL STATIONS.

At twenty-two centres throughout the State the Board has established Aboriginal Stations under the control of a Teacher-Manager, whose wife also acts as Matron. The Aborigines on these Stations being under competent and regular supervision, are generally well conducted and self-respecting, a reasonable standard of discipline being maintained. It is the Board's experience that such reasonable discipline is essential to the wellbeing of the Aborigines, and it is due to the lack of requisite disciplinary supervision that those Aborigines are living under undesirable conditions referred to above.

Reports received from the Managers of Stations were generally satisfactory. Advantage was taken of employment offering outside the Stations, and when this was not available the able-bodied men carried out improvements such as fencing, road-making, clearing, building, and other work of a useful nature, within the boundaries of the Reserves themselves.

New huts were erected at a number of centres, while repairs and additions were effected to existing buildings. In some cases the Aborigines were able to erect the frames and walls upon the completion of which they were supplied with roofing iron and other materials necessary for their completion.

In all cases the Board follows the policy of, as far as possible, assisting the Aborigines to assist themselves, and this system, together with the supply of gardening implements, flower and vegetable seeds, and the planting of natural and ornamental trees, helps to create in them a pride in their homes and a sense of proprietorship. This is an important aid to the policy of graduating the Aboriginal from his former primitive state to the standards of the white man, among whom he is gradually learning to stand as a self-respecting citizen.

At several Stations pumping plants have been installed, providing a water supply for domestic purposes, including gardens around the Aborigines' houses, and also for general cultivation plots in which a supply of vegetables is grown for general issue to the Aborigines. Lucerne plots have also been laid down, for fodder purposes for milking cows.

At Pilliga a new diesel engine was installed to drive a small sawbench, the milled timber being used at this and other Stations for general building purposes.

It is of interest to note that at Stations where conditions permitted, the Aborigines took an active part in sport, teams competing in district cricket and football competitions. Here again is a factor which is of importance in the graduating of these people into a type of citizen who can be an asset to the community in which he is living.

ABORIGINES RESERVES.

Those Aborigines Reserves not under the supervision of resident Managers were regularly visited and reported upon by the Police, who are responsible for the issue of rations and blankets, etc., and for maintaining a general oversight of the residents.

TRAINING HOMES.

The Board maintains at Cootamundra and Kinchela, Homes for the training of girls and boys respectively. Here children who are orphans, or were found living under neglected conditions in various parts of the State, are schooled and trained until they reach the age of fourteen or fifteen years, when they are placed out in suitable situations, the girls generally in domestic service and the boys on farms and stations, where they remain, still under the Board's supervision, under apprenticeship conditions for a period of four or five years. Thus they are cared for until they reach an age of discretion, when they are the better able to fend for themselves.

The United Aborigines Mission conducts a Children's Home at Bomaderry, under the supervision of the Board, which also supplies rations, medical attention, and other assistance. Children up to ten years of age are accommodated at this Home, and thereafter are transferred to Cootamundra or Kinchela.

EDUCATION.

Satisfactory reports were received from District School Inspectors regarding the operation of special schools established on all the Aboriginal Stations, and at other centres where the Aboriginal population warrants. In these schools the pupils are taught in accordance with a special syllabus prepared by the Department of Education.

FAMILY ENDOWMENT.

Under a special arrangement between the Commissioner of Family Endowment and this Department, endowment payable in respect of Aboriginal children is administered in their interests by the Board which places orders with butchers, bakers, grocers, and dairymen, etc., for the children's requirements, thus ensuring that the whole of the money is applied for the benefit of the child itself.

This system has now been in operation for a number of years with excellent results. Direct cash payment is, however, allowed in a number of cases, where reports furnished by local officers indicate that the parents concerned may be safely trusted to expend the money in the interests of their children, the privilege being at once withdrawn should there be any evidence of failure in this regard.

A sum of £19,258 13s. 4d. was administered by the Board during the period under review.

NUMBERS AND EXPENDITURE.

On 30th June a census of Aborigines throughout the State was taken, and the figures made available to the State and Federal Government Statisticians. These disclosed that in New South Wales there remain 909 full bloods and 9,365 half-castes, a

total of 10,274 (as compared with 10,381 the previous year), in the care and protection of which an amount of £54,624 was expended (as compared with £54,082 the previous year), including items within the votes of the Aborigines' Protection Board, and Departments of Public Health, Education, Government Stores, and Resumed Properties, and allowing for a deduction in respect of revenue and receipts amounting to £1,715.

HEALTH.

The health of the Aborigines during the year was satisfactory, no epidemics of a serious nature having occurred among them. Suitable provision exists for their care from a medical standpoint at practically every large centre of population. Where available Hospitals provide them with necessary treatment, and at some centres special wards have been erected for the purpose.

Treatment rooms have been established at certain of the Board's Stations, where Aborigines may secure nursing attention, while the services of the local Medical Officer are always requisitioned in case of serious illness or emergency.

Provision has been made in the Bill to amend the Aborigines Protection Act, which is now receiving the Government's consideration, which will clothe the Board with power, on the order of the Director-General of Public Health, to have Aborigines medically examined and treated where such a course of action appears to be necessary.

OBITUARY.

The Board regrets to advise the death of the late Mr. Alfred William Green, one of its oldest and most active members, and in doing so desires to place on record its deep appreciation of his kindly nature and sterling qualities, and of the keen interest manifested at all times by him during his many years' association with the work.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion the Board again desires to express appreciation of the services and assistance rendered to it by the members of the New South Wales Police Force, who act as the Board's agents at places where it does not possess its own Officers, and whose ready co-operation at all times makes possible the carrying out of its functions.

Yours faithfully,

WM. J. MACKAY, Chairman.

E. B. HARKNESS, Vice-Chairman.

ROY S. VINCENT,

B. C. HARKNESS,

E. SYDNEY MORRIS,

H. J. BATE,

W. J. SCULLY,

} Members A.P. Board.

Sydney: Alfred James Kent, I.S.O., Government Printer—1936.

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"Aborigines, Annual Report of Board for Protection of, for the year ended 30th June 1935"