

1920.
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QUEENSLAND.

REPORT

UPON THE

OPERATIONS OF THE SUB-DEPARTMENTS

OF

Aboriginals, Prisons, Government Relief, Diamantina
Hospital for Chronic Diseases (South Brisbane),
Jubilee Sanatorium for Consumptives (Dalby),
Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, and Westwood
Sanatorium.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY COMMAND.

BRISBANE:

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Reports upon the Operations of Certain Sub-Departments of the Home Secretary's Department.

Home Secretary's Department,
Brisbane, 5th November, 1920.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE HOME SECRETARY.

I have the honour to submit, for presentation to Parliament, the following information regarding the operations of the under-mentioned Sub-Departments of this Department.

WILLIAM GALL,
Under Secretary.

ABORIGINALS (Chief Protector, J. W. Bleakley).

PRISONS (Comptroller-General, A. T. Peirson).

GOVERNMENT RELIEF (Officer in Charge, D. A. Hogan).

DIAMANTINA HOSPITAL FOR CHRONIC DISEASES, SOUTH BRISBANE (Visiting Medical Officer, Dr. A. Jefferis Turner).

JUBILEE SANATORIUM FOR CONSUMPTIVES, DALBY (Visiting Medical Officer, Dr. Wm. H. Jamison).

DUNWICH BENEVOLENT ASYLUM (Medical Superintendent, Dr. J. Booth-Clarkson).

Aboriginals Department.—Information contained in Report for the Year ended 31st December, 1919.

The most noteworthy occurrence was the epidemic of pneumonic influenza which swept over the southern portions of the State and seriously affected the aboriginals. The explosive character of the outbreak caused such panic amongst the first natives affected that it was only the unselfish action of the officials at the Settlement and camps in caring for the sick, often at great risk to themselves, that kept the mortality to what can only be regarded as a low figure when compared with that of other countries with native races.

The behaviour of the Settlement staffs and district protectors and of many of their native assistants was most praiseworthy. One official, Mr. C. A. Maxwell, succumbed to a severe relapse.

Another feature of the year was the movement, originated by the University Social Workers' League, putting forward a scheme for the betterment of the aboriginals of the State.

At a public meeting, presided over by His Excellency the Governor, an Advisory Council, representing all religious and philanthropic bodies, was formed, and deputations waited upon the Premier, the Treasurer, and the Home Secretary.

In accordance with their requests, a draft Bill, embracing the object of the scheme, and a report on the whole question, were prepared, but the proposal was not proceeded with as funds were not available.

INSPECTIONS.

As in 1918, it was not possible last year to carry out the usual inspections of the Northern institutions and districts, owing to the influenza epidemic and the shipping dislocation. The last inspection of these places was in 1916.

The Barambah Settlement was visited three times and the Taroom Settlement once. A visit was also paid to the Mission at Purga.

LABOUR CONDITIONS ON LAND.

The demand for aboriginal labour has not been affected by the enforcement of the new Employment Regulations, introduced in June, to the extent that some predicted. These Regulations made wages and working conditions, especially in station work, more in keeping with those enjoyed by white employees, and though, for a while, there was a threatened slump in employment, the majority of employers accepted the terms, in some cases expressing approval, especially of the conditions for closer and stricter supervision of wages' transactions. Most of the idle labour was, in time, absorbed by others quite satisfied to pay the price.

One result, which cannot be regarded as other than beneficial, was that a number of old people and very young children, who were being exploited as cheap labour, were sent to reserves where they would receive proper care.

The total number of natives placed under agreement was 3,523 (males 2,813, females 710), and permits were issued for the casual employment of 433 males and 33 females.

Reports of behaviour and observance of agreement conditions were generally satisfactory.

One fresh protectorate was formed at Mitchell, previously a part of Roma district; the total number of district protectors now being 74.

Eighty-nine trackers were employed by the Police Department, and two were recruited for service in Victoria.

LABOUR CONDITIONS ON BOATS.

The number of natives employed by the pearlshell and bêche-de-mer fleet in Torres Strait was 445, of whom 298 were islanders and 147 mainlanders. The wages earned by these men amounted to £5,350, the islanders receiving £3,850 and the mainlanders £1,500.

Another 254 island men were occupied working their tribal "company" boats, and in this way earned £12,479 for the benefit of the communities. Some other families, working their own boats, earned £3,358.

At Cooktown, 100 mainlanders were engaged on the bêche-de-mer and trochus shell vessels, the wages earned amounting to about £900.

For some time the revision of the wages rates for the fishing industry has been under consideration and, as marine produce has advanced considerably in value, the minimum rates for the next half year have been fixed at £3 to £4 10s. per month for island men and £1 10s. per month for mainlanders, until conditions can be inquired into with a view to proper regulation of this employment. The employment of any boys under sixteen years of age in this industry has been prohibited.

INSURANCE AND COMPENSATION.

Claims under the Workers' Compensation Acts were made for one fatal and thirty non-fatal accidents to aboriginals, and compensation amounting to £747 9s. 4d. was awarded. The compensation was disbursed under the Department's supervision.

Compensation to the full amount under the fatal diseases section of the Acts was also awarded to the widow and family of the late Mr. C. A. Maxwell, who died of pneumonic influenza while in charge of the Aboriginal Settlement at Taroom.

ABORIGINAL TRUST ACCOUNTS.

The number of Savings Bank accounts now held in trust for natives is 6,145, of which 1,086 are held in Brisbane for natives of Settlements and 131 for girls in service. The remainder, 4,928, are controlled by District Protectors for members of camp tribes. These do not include credit accounts possessed by inmates of Missions on their own institutions.

This shows an increase of 692 accounts.

The total balance to credit is £131,415, of which £7,974 is owned by Settlement inmates. This exceeds last year's total by £23,686, and the average per head now is £21.

The wages collected and banked amounted to £61,842, exclusive of interest earned, £3,327, showing an increase of £18,436 on the previous year, and the withdrawals allowed for clothing and other needs totalled £39,444.

The native is daily understanding better the value to himself of the banking system and learning to profit by it.

HALF-CASTE SOLDIERS' AFFAIRS.

Practically all the half-caste soldiers had returned from active service by end of this year. In nearly every case where the Department had assumed control of their affairs while absent the men had the pleasant surprise on their return of finding that most, if not all, of their military pay had been saved for them. The womenfolk had been well cared for, were well dressed, and there had been no extravagance.

As exemplifying the wisdom of the action taken for their protection, several cases have come to light where men, who had evaded the departmental control, were defrauded of their allotment money by designing persons, in some cases Europeans, posing as next-of-kin, who had no claim on the soldier.

Unfortunately, the Military Authorities, after co-operating with us in protecting the allotment of pay, for some inexplicable reason handed the whole of the reserve pay, on discharge, to the soldier direct, the result being that many of them wasted it in drink and vice.

Some of the girls showed a gratifying common sense by remaining in service while their husbands were away and saving his money and their own wages towards a home when he returned. One girl even bought an allotment of ground and built a neat cottage. Several of these couples were granted exemption and, with their savings, were enabled to start life comfortably, and, as evidence of appreciation, one such couple asked the department to continue charge of their bank account.

The accounts of eight soldiers, aggregating £609 4s. 8d., are still in the charge of the Department. Two accounts, amounting to £118 15s. 6d., were transferred with the men to other districts, and six of the men have joined the Settlement. One man, who, with allotment and reserved pay, drew about £350 on return, has taken up a selection.

AUXILIARY KETCH "MELBIDIR."

The vessel has been stationed for the whole year at Thursday Island acting as patrol boat and tender around Torres Strait Islands.

From August to December the master, Captain Hutchins, was absent on leave and on special piloting work, and Captain Mortensen, of Thursday Island, was temporarily in charge.

CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION.

Applications for exemption were made by 131 half-castes, and in 63 cases—49 males and 14 females—certificates were issued. The remaining 68 applications were refused, the persons not being legally or otherwise eligible.

Many of these applications were undoubtedly prompted by employers anxious in this way to evade the stricter employment regulations. Strict inquiry into and examination of every claim was made.

REMOVALS AND RECOGNISANCES.

Bonds were entered into for the temporary transfer of 49 natives from their own to other districts, and in no case was it found necessary to estreat any such recognisances.

FOOD AND OTHER RELIEF.

Regular relief rations, amounting to £1,342, were issued from 32 centres in monthly allowances of from £1 to £10.

Casual or emergency relief, amounting to £69, was also issued as need arose, and £277 was spent in relief to sufferers in the influenza outbreaks.

BLANKET ISSUES.

Blankets were distributed to the various institutions and camps on the requisition of the officers in charge, this being found the most satisfactory method of ensuring the relief of all in need. Where it was deemed advisable, other articles more likely to be serviceable, such as clothing or material, hunting and fishing gear, were supplied.

In addition to the balance of 158 from 1918 a total of 4,449 blankets were issued to 1,603 men, 1,490 women, and 983 children. The cost of blankets and goods in lieu was £2,573, and packing and carriage amounted to £106.

The important duty of purchase and despatch was carried out by the Government Storekeeper, but the shipping dislocation greatly hampered delivery.

OFFENCES AGAINST ABORIGINALS— DRINK AND OTHER ABUSES.

The following comparative table of prosecutions for offences against the Aboriginal Protection Acts for the past three years speaks for itself:—

Offences.	1917.		1918.		1919.	
	No.	Fines.	No.	Fines.	No.	Fines.
Assault	1	..	1	10	..	..
Harbouring	17	144	11	110	2	20
Illegal employment ..	14	59	24	169	8	58
Illegal recruiting ..	1	1	..	..	..	..
Possession of opium ..	31	322	29	271	28	241
Sale of poison	1	1	..	..	1	10
Supplying drink	25	530	36	775	16	325
Supplying opium	1	20	3	70	3	60

OFFENCES BY ABORIGINALS.

The following comparative statement of offences for which aboriginals have been convicted during the last three years speaks for itself:—

Offence.	1917.	1918.	1919.
Assault	5	9	9
Creating disturbance ..	3	9	6
Desertion from employment ..	7	3	..
Ship desertion	4	3	25
Drunkenness	87	88	20
Illegally on premises	5	3	2
Indecent exposure	1	1	..
Murder	1	..	5
Obscene language	1	13	11
Stealing	20	9	3
Suicide	1	..	..
Uncontrolled children	2	..	..
Setting fire to property ..	..	..	1
Working unfit horses .. ..	..	..	1
Refusing duty on ship .. ..	..	..	1
Resisting arrest .. .. .	..	..	1

The numbers of natives removed to reserves by order of the Minister for disciplinary reasons or for their relief and protection were as follows:—

—	Men.	Women.	Children.	Total.
<i>Settlements—</i>				
Barambah	10	3	4	17
Taroom	13	4	1	18
Palm Island	50	26	11	87
<i>Missions—</i>				
Yarrabah	30	23	27	80
Cape Bedford .. .. .	..	..	10	10
Deebing Creek	1	..	..	1
Mapoon .. .. .	..	1	..	1
Mornington Is.	1	..	..	1
	105	57	54	216

HEALTH.

The year under review has been marked by the wave of influenza which swept over certain portions of the State and exacted a serious toll of the aboriginal population. Exact information as to the number of natives affected is not available, but as nearly as can be estimated 298 deaths resulted. The heaviest tolls were in the Southern camps, the first outbreak occurring at Barambah, where over 600 people contracted the complaint and 87 succumbed, principally from sheer superstitious fright. Very shortly after, a similar outbreak occurred at Taroom Settlement, affecting over 200 people and resulting in 31 deaths. In each case the epidemic wave had swept over the European residents of the district before reaching the natives. Fortunately, precautions had been taken some time before at these stations to meet the danger, and it is certainly due to the fact that ample stocks of blankets, clothing, invalid foods, medicines, &c., were in hand that the medical officers and Settlement officials, who were untiring in their care of the sick people, were able to save at least 85 per cent. of the cases, for the explosive nature of the outbreak crippled all means of transport or possibility of help from outside, and also all arrangements for temporary accommodation or isolation of cases.

The districts most affected were—Western line to Charleville, the larger centres of the North Coast, the Great Northern line to Richmond, the Cairns district and its hinterland.

Outbreaks of malaria occurred at Turn-off Lagoon, Innisfail, Mareeba, and Weipa Mission, resulting in 4 deaths. Venereal disease is reported from the Gulf districts, Mackay, Townsville, Maytown, Cooktown, Chillagoe, and Somerset. Altogether, 34 cases are known to have received hospital treatment, and there were 7 deaths reported.

A number of cases were discovered and successfully treated even on Mornington Island. The Protector at Thursday Island reports that venereal is prevalent on Cape York Peninsula, and several cases of very young children were brought into hospital and sent down to the Tropical Diseases Hospital in Townsville.

He adds that there can be little prospect of effecting any improvement unless measures are taken for proper isolation and treatment. The Lock Hospitals at Fitzroy Island and Torres Strait are badly needed to enable this problem to be dealt with. There were 29 cases of beriberi treated on Barambah Settlement, and many of these cases, while still under treatment, fell victims to the influenza.

Health has generally been good on the Northern Missions and in Torres Strait, where it is found that the practice of building the houses on high stumps has resulted in a marked improvement. Hookworm disease is prevalent on the Gulf Stations, and three deaths are reported.

The country hospitals have given valuable help in treating the sick, and the Brisbane General Hospital has always generously received serious cases, but it is expected that the commodious hospital now being erected at Barambah Settlement will do much towards easing the difficulties of hospital accommodation.

The total number of deaths reported, including those caused from influenza, was 552. Of these, 120 occurred at Barambah, 38 at Taroom, 13 at Palm Island, 9 at Monamona, and 34 in Torres Strait, the bush camps accounting for 338. Against these the number of births recorded were 247, of which 89 stand to credit of Torres Strait and 26 to Barambah Settlement.

YOUNG WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

As already shown, 33 women and 16 children were removed to the various settlements, and 24 women and 38 children to Mission Stations, where it will be possible to afford them proper care and training and protect them from exploitation.

No record of tribal marriages could be kept, but 35 legal marriages were authorised. Of these 28 were to other half-castes and aboriginals and 7 only were to aliens, viz., European 1, Pacific Islanders 2, Samoan 1, Jamaican 1, and Malay 2. In nearly every case the women married to aliens were half-breeds. The marriage of full-blood women to Europeans or Asiatics is firmly discouraged.

All European half-caste mothers were assisted to obtain the maternity allowance and 16 claims were forwarded through this office. In all cases the money has been spent under departmental supervision.

The number of girls under agreement from the Brisbane Office is 127, of whom 56 are employed in the town and suburbs, and 71 in the country. Included in this number are 28 full-bloods.

The Department is endeavouring as far as possible to restrict the employment of girls in town and place them in the country, where conditions are far healthier and they are not subjected to so many of the temptations of the city.

The total number of Savings Bank accounts owned by the girls is 146, with a credit balance of £3,894, averaging about £26 12s. per head. The total wages collected on their behalf was £2,386, and of this £2,264 was spent on clothing, dentistry, holidays, &c. The average withdrawal per head was nearly £18.

The girls in the town and suburbs were inspected regularly by the visiting Protector, and very few complaints with regard to accommodation, treatment, or behaviour in employment were received.

The visiting Protector did much useful work in selection and purchase of clothing for the girls and for those out on agreement from the various Settlements. She also selected all clothing and drapery for the Settlement Retail Stores, thus ensuring that the articles obtained were suitable for the natives' requirements.

The difficulty of obtaining white servants in the other States has created a demand for the aboriginal girls, who, through being under departmental supervision, are easier to control. Because of the many moral dangers, every effort has been made, and strict instructions given, to restrict to the utmost the removal of girls from country districts to the city or Southern States. Employers will often go to any length to circumvent this restriction, and, as the motive is mostly a selfish one, the wisdom of a strict adherence to the rule will be apparent if we are to place the moral welfare of these girls before the convenience of the employer.

The children in Industrial Homes number 53, and are distributed as follows:—Sacred Heart Mission, Thursday Island, 15; Salvation Army Industrial School (Girls), Yeronga, 13; (Boys) Riverview, 4; Aboriginal Industrial Industrial Homes—Mapoon 6, Purga 13, Yarrabah 2.

The total cost for maintenance of the children was £623 13s. 10d.

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS.

The total population of the Torres Strait Islands is 2,450; 89 births were recorded, and the deaths numbered 33.

SCHOOLS.—The school attendance has been good, and the general conduct of the pupils satisfactory. New schools have been erected at

Duaun and Boigu by the natives. The Torres Strait Anglican Mission supplied the native teachers, and the Government found all fittings, stationery, and school requisites. The native teachers at Adam and Coconut are doing well.

The school at Saibai suffered damage from heavy winds, and work has been hampered through changes in native staff. Good progress has been made at all schools, and the girls at Badu are becoming quite proficient at lace-making.

ISLAND FUND.—Island Fund collections for the year amount to £2,948, an increase of £1,017 on the figures for 1918. The expenditure was £1,578, an increase of £77. The total amount to the credit of the fund on 31st December, 1919, was £3,534, an increase of £1,371. The aborigines are beginning to realise the utility of their fund, as during the months of January, February, and March, which they call the poor time, they have been able to obtain supplies sufficient to tide them over until the produce from their gardens comes in.

HEALTH.—The general health has been very good, with the exception of Murray Island, where they had an epidemic of influenza, in a very mild form, with no serious results.

Now that all houses are built off the ground the improvement in health is very noticeable.

BOATS, GARDENS, &C.—The returns of Island boats working direct with the Protector's Office have again far exceeded those of any previous year. The boats have worked very well, and their crews are worthy of great praise. The greater portion of the boats have been in commission for a number of years, and, in most cases, were second-hand when purchased; consequently the repairs required to keep them in sea-going condition are very numerous and, at the present time, very costly. The Harbour Master has rendered great assistance in examining boats and supervising repairs. During the year one boat, the "Saruai," was purchased for the Boigu people and they are working well.

The boats trading to the Thursday Island Aboriginal Store as above number thirteen, and their catch totalled £6,061. Ten boats trade to the Papuan Industries Store at Badu, and their catch amounted to £4,913. Besides this, £1,504 worth of produce won by "passenger" workers—that is, private individuals working their own dinghies from shore—was sold and, after home needs had been supplied by the plantations, £194 worth of copra and £49 worth of garden produce was also disposed of.

In addition, one family of four half-caste brothers, working their own boats, won produce amounting to £2,971, and another man working privately earned £386 in the same way.

The total earnings thus amounted to £16,081, and, after refitting with stores and gear, £1,991 was paid into the Savings Bank to the Island Funds or in redemption of boat debts, the rest being distributed amongst the natives interested.

GENERAL.—Fifty days were spent in patrol work during the year 1919, and a distance of 1,256 miles was covered.

The matter of intoxicating drinks being supplied to the natives is the most vexed question that has to be dealt with in Torres Strait. Although every available precaution is being taken to check it, there is no doubt that it is still being carried on to a great extent. To cope effectually with this it will be necessary to keep the natives away from Thursday Island.

If an island trading station could be acquired, in a central position with good anchorage, the island native trade could be kept under Government control and, if worked on business lines, could be made almost self-supporting. Besides being a centre for their commerce and recruiting, there is no reason why such a place should not be made attractive to the natives, by providing the picture show and similar amusements they are so fond of.

Provision should also be made for teaching the natives different trades, such as sailmaking, plumbing and tin work, blacksmithing, and such like. At present, when a boy leaves school he goes out diving in a boat and, when too old for that, he knows nothing else.

RESERVES

The fundamental principle of the aborigines betterment scheme brought forward last year was "complete segregation," and it is only under such conditions that any measures for the social betterment of the race can have any hope of success. The policy of absorbing them in the labour market has, after over twenty years' trial, proved itself a failure, for the race are no further advanced socially; in fact, physically and morally they have degenerated. It is only the able-bodied, mostly the half-castes, who benefit, if it can be called benefit. The great majority still are outcast and destitute.

The need for, and expenditure on, relief is yearly increasing, and protection becomes daily more difficult. In fact, under existing conditions, efficient care and protection are absolutely impossible. Only by concentration in communities where their physical, moral, and social needs can be provided for can this race be given the protection so sorely needed.

The native is very susceptible to all the physical and moral ills of our civilisation, and it is only by complete separation of the two races that we can save him from hopeless contamination and eventual extinction, as well as safeguard the purity of our own blood.

It is estimated that half the aborigines of this State are half-castes, which indicates that they have already suffered a 25 per cent. infusion of white blood, and it is indisputable that the European population must, in the process, have also been contaminated to an extent sufficient to warrant serious reflection.

The alternative to segregation is their eventual absorption by the more numerous and more virile race, a prospect not to be viewed without some misgivings.

GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENTS.

Barambah (Superintendent, B. J. T. Lipscombe).

Taroom (Superintendent, C. A. Maxwell—died June).

Taroom (Acting Superintendent, from June, R. A. Kydd).

Palm Island (Superintendent, R. H. Curry).

Labour.—The demand for labour from the Settlements has been fairly good, but eased down somewhat on the new wages regulations coming into operation. These regulations brought the wages and working conditions of the native workers to a standard more in keeping with the present day value of labour and, consequently, there was less inducement to employers to prefer their services because of cheapness.

The number of natives engaged out was—

Barambah, 253, including 93 for casual terms.

Taroom 57, including 8 casual.

Palm Island 34, including 10 casual.

Conduct in employment has been good, and the treatment by employers has been generally satisfactory.

The wages deductions collected amounted to £6,392, being for Barambah £4,032, Taroom £748, and Palm Island £1,611. Of this the following amounts were contributions to Settlement maintenance:—Barambah £529, Taroom £100, and Palm Island £206. The balances to credit of these stations are—Barambah £4,775, Taroom £803, Palm Island £2,394.

These savings earned interest amounting to £257.

Health.—As already mentioned, the severe epidemic of influenza which swept over the Settlements in May and June was responsible for the increased mortality and was naturally a contributing factor in much of the ill-health for the remainder of the year.

At Barambah there were 600 cases of influenza and 87 deaths; at Taroom 200 cases and 31 deaths; and at Palm Island, where the attack was of a lighter nature, there were only a few deaths.

At Barambah 29 natives were treated for beri-beri and some of these succumbed to the complications with the influenza. Two natives also died from syphilis.

The total death record at each place, including influenza, was—Barambah 120, Taroom 37, and Palm Island 13.

Births numbered—Barambah 26, Taroom 4, and Palm Island 3.

Crime.—There is no serious crime or misconduct to report. Ten natives absconded from Taroom, but a number came back of their own accord and others were captured and returned. At Palm Island a small lock-up has proved useful in combating unruliness, gambling, and other breaches of regulations.

The officers generally are to be complimented upon the good discipline prevailing.

Retail Stores.—These stores have now become an indispensable part of Settlement administration, and always prove their value in times of trouble. In the influenza outbreak the stock of delicacies and food extras was a godsend. The sales at each place amounted to—Barambah £3,512, Taroom £1,321, and Palm Island £915. The profits from these stores are, to a great extent, devoted to the relief of the old indigents, the young, and sick.

School.—Satisfactory progress has been made, but the need for better accommodation is keenly felt. The present buildings are both inadequate and insanitary. The teachers, however, have courageously worked on under conditions which make efficient work impossible, and the children are clean, healthy, and bright. The girls do neat sewing and mending, and the exercises and books are neatly written.

At Taroom the teacher has no quarters as yet, and, for a similar reason, it has not yet been possible to appoint a teacher at Palm Island.

Industries.—The drought has again greatly retarded agricultural operations. A creditable quantity of stock feed and vegetables has been grown by hand watering and utilised for home consumption.

At Barambah pig-raising has been carried on. The sawmill has also provided paid employment for a number of inmates. New stockyards, milking yards, and paddocks have been erected and a strong dam built.

At Taroom the sheep returned 16½ cwt. wool, which sold for £161. The orchard again suffered from the drought. The rainfall was less than 9 inches for the year. The fruit and shade trees all had to be hand-watered to keep them alive. Thirty acres of prickly-pear were cleared and about 12 acres cleared of undergrowth, grubbed, and stumped. Five acres were also put under the plough.

At Palm Island 14 acres have been cleared and put under the plough, and a good supply of sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and peanuts raised for home consumption.

Stock.—The stock at both Southern Settlements felt the effect of the drought and fell off considerably in condition. Notwithstanding this, about 30 head of our own bullocks went to augment the beef supply at Barambah. After the debilitating effects of the influenza epidemic, extra supplies of strengthening foods were needed, and the increased issues of meat proved of great value.

The stock now number 516, a substantial increase on the previous year, which can be credited to the introduction of three good young bulls; the horses number 20; the pigs number 22, and there are still about 60 goats.

At Taroom, the cattle numbered 156, including 25 young cows bought and 16 calves branded, the sheep numbered 510, and 118 lambs were marked. Eleven sheep were killed for mutton.

Palm Island, so far, only possesses a couple of plough horses.

Administrative Buildings.—The sawmill at Barambah, which had to be closed down during 1918, was opened again in June, and this enabled a start to be made on the scheme of improvements with a commodious hospital. Unfortunately, progress was retarded through difficulty in getting a competent sawyer, but, in addition to the hospital, a serviceable building with barn, horse stalls, drays, tools, and machinery sheds, a house for the single men, and two cottages for native families have been commenced. A commodious cottage for the native stockman has been built adjoining the stockyards.

At Taroom, a new dip, stockyards, and butcher's shop have been erected, and a roomy shed for the engine and sawbench. A bridge was also built over the river and bush awnings for the hospital, girls' quarters, school, &c., as the primitive buildings now in use were quite uninhabitable in the summer. It was not possible to provide the much-needed extra quarters.

At Palm Island, the three cottages for married officials commenced at the end of the previous year were completed, with skilled help, and temporary buildings for use as hospital, store, office, nurses' quarters and dispensary were erected, with aboriginal labour, from the cyclone salvage.

Social Improvement.—Again there is very little to boast of in the way of social progress. The vices of gambling and immorality cannot be successfully combated unless living conditions are provided that will make possible the cultivation of a higher standard of family life and encourage the development of home industries and indulgence in healthy and refining recreations.

At Palm Island town-planning lines have been followed, and recent visitors have commented on its order and neatness. Seven young couples have married, first building homes for themselves according to village specifications. The good discipline and moral tone clearly evidences the value of these conditions.

The Settlement at Small River, on Cape York, of the remnants of the old Seven Rivers and Red Island tribes, which was established by themselves and has been carried on without European management, has proved that the native is ready and anxious to adopt suitable civilised ideas if given encouragement or opportunity.

These people support themselves entirely by working their own fishing vessels and gardens, selling the produce in Thursday Island.

Religious Instruction.—At Barambah and Taroom religious services and instruction have as usual been provided by the local Church of England clergymen. The inmates appear to display a keen appreciation of these ministrations, and many have evidently benefited by them.

At Palm Island, the natives, led by a Torres Strait Islander, conduct their own religious services. The nurse conducts Sunday school classes for the children. A small organ, purchased last year from their own savings, has proved a source of delight to them.

Recreations.—The usual material for outdoor sports was provided, and hunting, fishing,

and innocent native amusements encouraged. The Christmas season was again celebrated with gifts of toys, clothing, and luxuries to make the week's holiday enjoyable.

During the epidemic of pneumonic influenza the Department suffered a loss in the death of Mr. Charles A. Maxwell, Superintendent of the Taroom Settlement, who succumbed to a severe relapse of the complaint on 5th June, 1919. Mr. Maxwell, though ill and worn out, stayed on duty, regardless of the danger to himself, attending to the stricken inmates. This officer undoubtedly died in harness. He was painstaking and zealous, and did not spare himself in his efforts for the welfare of the people under his care. It is pleasing to know that his widow and young family have been able to receive the usual assistance under the Workers' Compensation Acts.

MISSIONS.

Yarrabah, Cairns (Superintendent, S. Lyon, F.R.G.S.).

Monamona, Cairns (Superintendent, J. L. Branford).

Cape Bedford, Cooktown (Superintendent, Rev. G. H. Schwarz).

Moa Island, Torres Strait (Superintendent, Rev. G. A. Luscombe).

Mapoon, Gulf of Carpentaria (Superintendent, Rev. J. B. Love, M.A.).

Weipa, Gulf of Carpentaria (Assistant Superintendent, R. P. Hall).

Aurukum, Gulf of Carpentaria (Assistant Superintendent, T. W. Holmes).

Trubanaman, Gulf of Carpentaria (Superintendent, Rev. H. Matthews).

Mornington Island, Gulf of Carpentaria (Superintendent, R. H. Wilson).

Purga, Ipswich (Superintendent, R. Morrison).

Conduct.—All reports as to disposition and behaviour of inmates are most satisfactory. There has been no crime or serious misconduct. The Superintendent at Mapoon points out that, of all the half-caste girls committed to their institution, none has come to grief. He attributes the excellent character of the people to the high moral influence of his predecessor, Rev. N. Hey. At Aurukum the inmates are very peaceable, and now meet their one-time enemies from Yonka and Kendall in a friendly way. The influence of the missionary and the affection of the natives for him were shown, when he went to Mornington Island to relieve for six weeks, by some of them volunteering to go with and take care of him.

The natives at Mornington Island are steadily regaining their confidence in the Mission. The murder of the late Superintendent three years ago greatly unsettled them, but the removal of those implicated in the tragedy had a wholesome moral effect.

Religious Influence.—The missionary at Cape Bedford voices the general opinion when he says that he is convinced that, without the

religious side of their work, the natives of to-day would be very little different from those of fifty years ago, without any aim in life, without self respect, or the possibility of gaining the respect of the white neighbours. As long as they are considered and treated as little better than animals there can be no incentive to them to live and act differently to such. The strongest lever for the uplifting of the aboriginal is a true and simple religion, and this teaching, to be successful, must be not less by example than by preaching.

Health.—Except for seasonal colds and light epidemics of influenza, health generally has been good. The Cape Bedford Mission, by carefully observing the instructions given as to quarantine and food stocks, succeeded in avoiding the influenza, although it reached Cooktown. Venereal disease is in evidence at nearly all Gulf Missions, and hookworm is prevalent. The East Coast Missions, which have been treated by the specialists of the hookworm campaign, report great benefits as a result.

Education.—School has been regularly carried on though somewhat hampered, in the less accessible places, through changes of staff and the dislocation of shipping, which upset food supplies. The primitive bush tribes in the neighbourhood of Aurukun are still sending their children in to the Mission to be taught.

Manual and domestic sciences have formed an important part of the training. The young girls sew garments for themselves and for the old camp women, and quickly learn to do fancy needlework. The school children also help in the care of cocoanut plantations and vegetable gardens.

Industrial.—All stations seem to have suffered from the drought, but the value of the gardens and other food-producing industries was proved during the shipping dislocation, when outside supplies were held up. The farm at McIvor River, managed entirely by aboriginals, practically kept the whole Cape Bedford Mission in food during that time.

The Mission farms raised sweet potatoes, maize, yams, bananas, cassava, and also sold £30 worth of peanuts and half a ton of copra. The home station plantations raised 15,000 pine-apples, also good supplies of cocoanuts, all of which were used for home consumption.

Twenty-six bullocks were sold at £10 15s. per head, and ten were killed for beef. Many of the men are engaged in fishing for bêche-de-mer, which pays well at present, and managed to save enough to buy a good 10-ton boat for £275.

Most of the families at the three out-stations support themselves from their gardens and boats.

At Mapoon, the chief industry is bêche-de-mer fishing, the crews working for their own benefit, and, in this way, entirely supporting their families. They also dispose of their garden produce and copra in a similar manner.

The station has 5,000 cocoanut trees, of which 1,000 are bearing. The stock comprise 175 cattle, 25 horses, and 3 mules. Seventy head

of cattle were sold for benefit of the Mission's expenses.

At Weipa, most of the income is derived from cutting sandalwood, which returned £360. Bêche-de-mer fishing earned £140. Some of the young married women earn some extra income by doing fancy crochet work.

The soil is not very suitable for agriculture.

At Aurukun, all the village houses were repaired. The gardens and crops were ruined by the prolonged dry weather. The water supply failed, and by August the inmates had to move to a site 5 miles away. This stopped all industrial operations.

The men are engaging in sandalwood cutting and bêche-de-mer fishing, endeavouring to earn the means for acquiring a suitable boat.

At Mornington Island, a severe storm in January demolished most of the outbuildings. These have been renewed and other improvements effected. The gardens returned 5½ tons of vegetables, and more land is being reclaimed for extension of these.

Several hundred cocoanuts are in nursery for a proposed plantation on Denham Island. Papaw, mango, and custard apple seedlings have also been planted. Home-grown produce comprised ½ ton of tomatoes, 93 dozen eggs, 112½ gallons milk, and 8,600 lb. of beef.

The stock is now four horses, seventeen cattle, forty-five goats, two pigs, and forty-eight fowls.

At Monamona, the cattle number 160, and the produce raised on the farm for home consumption was 80 tons of potatoes, 10 tons of cassava, and 1,200 bunches of bananas.

A sawmill with 28 h.p. engine has been installed, and returned revenue amounting to £1,000, which makes the Mission now almost self-supporting. A four-roomed house and five native cottages have been erected.

At Purga, the drought ruined the crops, and work on the neighbouring farms was not available for the same reason. This Mission has been taken over by the Department and negotiations are in progress with the Salvation Army, which proposes to assume the management.

No returns from Yarabah or Mitchell River are available. The former place experienced an epidemic of influenza in August which affected 200 inmates. It is a great credit to the management that there were no deaths. One result was that the garden and other crops were neglected for some weeks, thus occasioning serious shortage of home-grown food supplies.

Social.—Very satisfactory progress is being made in improving the living conditions of the inmates of the Missions. The policy followed is to develop the spirit of self-dependence and foster private husbandry.

The fact that so many of what, only recently, were myalls have voluntarily adopted the settled life and, in many cases, have demonstrated their ability to maintain themselves, shows that these people are capable of rising to a higher social plane if given the opportunity.

The results on these institutions offer convincing evidence that their policy of segregation and cultivation of home and community life is the one most likely to make for the permanent welfare and happiness of this race.

ABORIGINAL PROTECTION PROPERTY ACCOUNT.

The following statement shows the receipts and disbursements of the money collected from unclaimed estates, which, by Regulation 14 of 1904, can only be utilised for the benefit of aboriginals:—

<i>Receipts.</i>		£	s.	d.
Balance, 31st December, 1918		3,517	1	1
Estates Deceased Aboriginals		3,110	18	9
Unclaimed Bank Balances		1,323	2	7
Wages—Deserters		63	6	5
Refunds—Temporary Loans—Advance Account		135	0	0
Various Refunds—Clothing, &c.		15	14	8
Bank Balances—Aboriginals removed to Reserves to be transferred		171	4	10
		£8,336	14	4

<i>Disbursements.</i>		£	s.	d.
<i>Expenses—</i>				
Sawmill, Barambah		517	6	4
Water Service, Barambah		97	13	3
Water Service, Taroom		5	9	6
Improvements—General, Barambah		752	18	1
Repairs to Palm Island Launch		146	1	1
Material for 3 Sharpies, Palm Island		14	19	8
Clothing and Rations, &c., to Destitute Aboriginals		109	0	4
Christmas Goods—Settlement Interest Account		218	18	1
Temporary Loans—Advance Account		279	17	9
Burials of Destitute Natives		232	10	5
Refund to Relatives—Deceased Estates		648	5	5
Miscellaneous		17	2	2
Balance		5,296	12	3
		£8,336	14	4

The estimated aboriginal population at end of the year was 16,500, and the total expenditure on relief was £35,710.

The collections, including wages and earnings of aboriginals, sales of produce of fishing vessels, settlements, &c., amounted to £100,732.

Report upon the Operations of certain Sub-Departments of the Home Secretary's Department - Aboriginal Department, Information contained in Report for the year ended 31st December 1919

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