

1936.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

ABORIGINES.

(ANNUAL REPORT OF BOARD FOR PROTECTION OF, FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1936.)

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Report of Board for Protection of Aborigines for the Year ended 30th June, 1936.

Office of Board for Protection of Aborigines,
Chief Secretary's Department,
(Bridge st. Entrance),
Sydney, 14 September, 1936.

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, 1935, to 30th June, 1936, 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.

ABORIGINAL STATIONS.

Provision is made for the care and protection of Aborigines in this State by the reservation of areas of land, which are devoted to their exclusive use. Over 100 such reserves have been established, and 21 of these organised as Aboriginal Stations, carrying a population of over 3,000 Aborigines, which are under the supervision of resident Managers, who in most cases also hold the dual position of Teacher-in-Charge of the School located thereon, and whose wives also act as Matrons.

These Officers devote the whole of their time and energies to the well-being of those committed to their care, the Matrons, of course, taking an especial interest in the women and children, and instructing the mothers in housekeeping and the care of their families.

Each Station is organised along village community lines, having its own free issue store, school, treatment room, water supply, and sanitary services.

The adult male Aborigines are expected to secure employment when available, and to maintain their wives and families, and they are assisted to do this by the Manager, who loses no opportunity of securing work on stations and farms throughout the district. The value of girls who have left school, for domestic service, is well-known, with a result that they are readily placed in suitable homes. In the case of the boys, steps are taken to secure situations where they receive a training which fits them to take their place in the usual rural industrial occupations.

At all of the Stations provision is made for the rendering of first aid, and a supply of medicines and simple remedies is always kept in stock. At certain of the larger centres, however, properly organised Treatment Rooms have been established, in the charge of a nurse, or where she is so qualified, in the charge of the Manager's wife.

At Pilliga Aboriginal Station, there is an excellently run sawmill, which is operated by the Manager, with the assistance of Aboriginal labour. Timber is cut for the erection of buildings on Stations and Reserves located within a considerable radius, at greatly reduced cost. The men engaged on this work are also receiving valuable training, which qualifies them to take employment in other mills in the district.

A new 27 horse-power Diesel engine, to drive this mill, was acquired and installed during the year.

Owing to the general economic position, numbers of Aborigines were, of course, unable to secure regular employment, and work had to be found for them on the Stations in return for rations and other benefits received. This work consisted of fencing, clearing, roadmaking, painting, and general maintenance. On Stations which are lacking in natural timber, Managers are instructed to arrange the planting of suitable trees and shrubs, in order to improve the appearance and comfort of the areas.

As a means of occupying their leisure time, organised sport is encouraged, and cricket and football teams at numbers of centres, make a good showing in district competitions. At one Station an interest is even taken in golf.

ABORIGINES RESERVES.

Apart from the Stations there are over 80 areas similarly set aside as reserves for the use of Aborigines, which are under the supervision of the nearest Police, who act generally as the Board's Agents, and are responsible for the issue of rations and blankets, for arranging medical and hospital treatment, and exercising a general oversight of the residents. Regular inspections are made, and reports furnished to the Board.

TRAINING HOMES.

Provision is made for the care and education of orphan and neglected aboriginal and half-caste children, by their transfer to Training Homes which the Board has established at Cootamundra and Kinchela respectively. Each of these Institutions accommodates about fifty inmates.

The girls receive a thorough training in domestic work, and are placed in approved situations under apprenticeship conditions.

At Kinchela the boys are trained for situations on farms and stations.

At each Home there is a School, which is attended by all those inmates of appropriate age.

After being placed in situations an interest is maintained by the Board in the welfare of these girls and boys, until they reach adult age. The bulk of their earnings are collected and held in trust, at ordinary bank rates of interest, and the whole of this money is later made available to meet the requirements of the individuals concerned, who are advised and guided in the wise and practical application of same.

At Bomaderry there is a Children's Home, conducted by the United Aborigines' Mission, under the supervision of the Board, which supplies rations, medical attention, and other assistance. Upon attaining the age of ten years children are transferred from this Home to Cootamundra or Kinchela.

EDUCATION.

The Board has established Schools for Aborigines at forty centres, including the Aboriginal Stations, and in these a Special Syllabus is taught, which are prepared and approved by the Department of Education. Regular annual inspection is made by District School Inspectors, copies of whose reports are submitted for the Board's information. These disclose that very satisfactory work is being done, the standard of achievement, as compared with similar white schools, particularly in such subjects as manual work, writing, and nature study, being most favourable.

Numbers of these schools enter their work at district shows, in competition with others, and the results are a tribute to the ability of the children, and the tuition they have received.

HEALTH.

Provision is made throughout the State for the care of the health of the Aborigines, who are admitted to hospitals, or given medical treatment, on the order of the Board's own Officers or the local Police.

Unfortunately at certain western centres there have been epidemics of eye complaints, which necessitate special steps being taken to deal with same. At Angledool a special medical inspection was made, as a result of which it was decided to close the Station, and remove the inhabitants to Brewarrina, where the Board already has a fine Reserve on the banks of the river, with a proper Treatment Room, and better housing and living conditions generally.

An outbreak of eye conditions also occurred at Toomelah, in the Moree district, which necessitated the Board placing a Manager and Matron in charge, the latter being a qualified nurse.

An amendment of the Aborigines Protection Act, which became effective immediately after the close of the year, has given the Board 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.

Apart from the above eye complaints, the health of the Aborigines generally has been satisfactory.

BUILDINGS.

Improved housing conditions were provided at various centres, and new buildings were erected at Woodenbong, Roseby Park, Moree, Taree, Cumeroogunga, Condobolin, and Brewarrina.

With the provision of additional funds, the Board is hopeful of gradually placing all its Reserves upon a satisfactory basis, so far as housing conditions are concerned, and also providing for numbers of Aborigines who are now living under undesirable conditions away from its Reserves. Power to secure their transfer thereto is embodied in the Aborigines Protection (Amendment) Act.

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 976 full bloods and 9,884 half-castes, a total of 10,860 (as compared with 10,274 the previous year), in the care and protection of which an amount of £57,265 was expended (as compared with £54,624 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 £1,461.

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,

THOS. J. LYNCH, Chairman.

E. B. HARKNESS

ROY S. VINCENT

B. C. HARKNESS

H. G. WALLACE

H. J. BATE

G. E. ARDILL

GEO. A. MITCHELL

W. J. SCULLY

} Members, A.P. Board.