

1929.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.
NEW SOUTH WALES.



ABORIGINES.

(ANNUAL REPORT OF BOARD FOR PROTECTION OF, FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1928.)

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Report of Board for Protection of Aborigines for the year ended
30th June, 1928.

Office of Board for Protection of Aborigines,
Sydney, 21st November, 1928.

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 honor to submit for the Chief Secretary's information the following report of the operations of the Board during the period 1st July, 1927, to the 30th June, 1928, 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.

The usual routine inspections of reserves and stations throughout the State were made by the Board's Inspector, who reported that, with a few exceptions, there was an improvement in general conditions. Work was scarce owing to the new industrial awards and regulations, which resulted in a considerable increase in the ration lists.

While it was found possible to make substantial improvements on several stations under the control of Managers, it was noticed that a number of reserves without residential supervision had deteriorated so far as the condition of their buildings, fencing, and other improvements were concerned. To remedy this condition of affairs it is the Board's policy to, where possible, appoint the female Teacher of the Aborigines School, when such is existent, as Matron of the Reserve, in which capacity she is responsible for the general oversight of same, and is charged with the duty of reporting anything immediately affecting the Board's interests.

New Managers' residences were erected on the Aboriginal Stations at Pilliga and Angledool, the former building replacing one which had been destroyed by fire. These structures were erected under the supervision of one of the Board's own officers, who was released from other duty for that purpose.

New huts were erected on the Aborigines' Reserve at Gingie Gingie by the Aboriginal residents, the Board supplying the material. Additional huts were also provided at Urunga and Condobolin, while improvements were effected to existing buildings at Runnymede, Carowra Tank, Burra Bee Dee, and Ul Gundahi Island.

A motor truck was purchased for use on the Aboriginal Station, Walhallow, near Quirindi.

While much has been done by the Board during recent years in the general improvement of housing conditions for the Aborigines, and the provision of adequate water supplies, there are several centres at which much work remains to be done, and in respect of which the Board is particularly desirous of securing additional funds to enable it to complete its programme. Representations have been made to the Government in this connection, and it is hoped that the matter will receive favourable consideration.

The usual issues of rations, blankets, and clothing were made to all deserving cases, a very careful check, however, being maintained to ensure that public funds were not in any way imposed upon.

The passing of the Family Endowment Act has resulted in a large number of Aborigines benefiting under its provisions. From reports obtained it would appear that in some cases the money has been wisely expended, but it is feared that in most instances the reverse is the case. It is understood that representations having been made to the Commissioner for Family Endowment, a proposal is being considered that the duty of administering money payable to Aborigines under this Act be imposed upon the Board. Properly expended this money should result in a considerable improvement in the living conditions of the recipients.

ABORIGINAL STATIONS.

At seventeen centres throughout the State the Board has established Aboriginal Stations, which are under the supervision of Teacher-Managers and Matrons, and the results achieved are satisfactory. The constant presence of a responsible officer ensures a proper distribution of aid, the maintenance of a decent standard of cleanliness and conduct, and tends to raise the moral tone of the residents. The Manager

also acts as a kind of labour exchange, and is able to keep his charges fairly constantly employed. Most of the stations now have the telephone connected, and employers take full advantage of this when wishing to engage assistance.

On those stations where the Aborigines have difficulty in securing supplies at reasonable prices sale stores have been established, at which groceries and other lines for which there is a popular demand may be purchased at cost price, their existence also tending to keep the men on the station and discourage them from expending their earnings in liquor.

COOTAMUNDRA HOME.

During the year seventeen children were admitted to the Board's Training Home for Girls at Cootamundra, while seventeen were drafted to situations, the average number of inmates for the year being forty-four.

This institution is a most important unit in the Board's activities, as the majority of female children who are rescued from neglected conditions are placed there for a period of training prior to their being sent out to service. There is also a school attached to the home, at which all those children of school age regularly attend.

The home is quite a feature of the town life of Cootamundra, and practically every appropriate local function is attended by the inmates, who never fail to evoke favourable comment regarding their appearance and general behaviour.

The buildings were maintained in a good state of repair, while the kitchen was improved by being extended to double its previous length, and having a fine cooking range installed.

A fairly adequate water supply is provided by overhead and underground tanks, a large dam, and a wind-mill. The Matron is thus enabled to maintain a large vegetable garden and orchard, which practically supplies the whole of the home requirements of vegetables, fruit, jam, and preserves, in addition to green feed for the milking cows, butter being also made at the home.

The health of the inmates was satisfactory, only three requiring treatment at the local hospital—two for adenoids and tonsils and one for a septic hand.

KINCHELA HOME.

At Kinchela on the Macleay River the Board has a Home for Boys, the number of inmates at 30th June being twenty-eight. These boys are educated in the school attached to the institution, and of which the Superintendent is the teacher. A few acres of land are cultivated for maize, potatoes, pumpkins and various vegetables and dairy feed, and the boys are thus given a training, which, supplemented by carpentry and other manual training at the school, fits them for positions on dairy farms and stations.

The health of the boys has been satisfactory, which is doubtless in a large measure due to the fact that they are given generous supplies of vegetables and fresh fruit. About a month is spent under canvas at the seaside during the Christmas holidays.

In addition to supervising the home, the Superintendent has a general oversight of numbers of Aborigines living at various centres along the river, and is responsible for the issue to them of rations, clothing, blankets, and other assistance.

CHILDREN'S HOME, BOMADERRY.

In addition to the homes at Cootamundra and Kinchela the Board partially maintains an institution known as the Children's Home at Bomaderry. This home is the property of the Australian Aborigines Mission, and is staffed by its workers.

It consists of four cottages standing in a large block of land within a short distance of Nowra railway station, and provides accommodation for about forty Aboriginal children, girls and boys, the latter, however, only remaining until they attain the age of 10 years, when they are transferred to Kinchela. As the girls arrive at a proper age they are placed in service, and apprenticed by the Board under its usual conditions.

The home is largely supported by private donations, while the Board provides the rations, meat, blankets and clothing, medical attendance, and other miscellaneous assistance.

EDUCATION.

Satisfactory work continues to be carried on in the various Aboriginal Schools throughout the State. These are regularly visited and reported upon by Inspectors attached to the Department of Education, whose reports disclose that a satisfactory standard is maintained.

The Board continued its policy of issuing rations to every child who regularly attended, a mid-day meal being provided at numbers of places where arrangements could be made by the Teacher for its preparation.

These schools are also visited by the medical and dental officers attached to the Department, and as a result the children receive proper attention in this direction also.

At one or two centres where dark children have previously attended the public school a difficulty has been created by the local Parents and Citizens' Association raising an objection to their presence, with a result that the Department has found it necessary to exclude them from further attendance. Where the numbers justify it the difficulty can be met by the provision of a separate school, but at some centres this has not been the case, and endeavour has therefore to be made to persuade the white parents to withdraw their objection.

EMPLOYMENT.

Owing to the passing of the Workers' Compensation Act numbers of adult Aborigines were temporarily thrown out of employment, while the legal responsibility of paying award wages militates to a certain degree against Aborigines securing work in competition with their white brethren. Speaking generally, however, the Aborigines were fairly constantly employed throughout the year.

There is not much difficulty with the younger generation as they are apprenticed, under the Board's conditions, which ensures their constant employment for at least four years, but in most instances for perhaps double that time. This period of constant employment thus results in habits of industry being formed to the benefit of the individual child and the State.

NUMBERS AND EXPENDITURE.

On 1st 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 1,201 full bloods and 6,844 half-castes, in the care and protection of which an amount of £37,584 was expended, including items within the votes of the Departments of Public Health, Education, Government Stores, and Resumed Properties, in addition to the Board's own funds.

CHRISTMAS CHEER.

The usual issue of Christmas rations and toys for the children was made, Christmas festivities being arranged on the various Aboriginal Stations and in the homes. In this connection it is interesting to note that the Aborigines in this State appear to think quite as much of the Christmas season as the average white person, and to be quite as anxious to return to his home to be within the family circle during the festive season.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, the Board desires to express the opinion that the Aborigines in this State are, with some exceptions, living under reasonable conditions. All those requiring same are provided with rations, blankets, clothing, medical attention, rail and steamer passes, assistance to secure employment, and other aid of an extraneous nature.

At numbers of centres the erection of proper dwellings is essential, while at other places existing buildings require to be lined and ceiled to provide a proper measure of comfort to the inmates, while the provision of a water supply at two or three of the Board's stations is also an urgent need.

The Board is also anxious to proceed with the remodelling of the Aborigines Reserve at La Perouse, and these matters will receive attention when necessary funds are provided.

The Board again records its appreciation of the assistance it has received from the members of the New South Wales Police Force, whose help has been indispensable to the successful carrying out of its functions.

Yours faithfully,

JAMES MITCHELL, Chairman.

E. B. HARKNESS,	} Members.
S. LASKER,	
ROBERT DICK,	
A. W. GREEN,	
R. S. VINCENT,	
B. J. DOE.	

The Under-Secretary, Chief Secretary's Department.