

1938.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

ABORIGINES.

(ANNUAL REPORT OF BOARD FOR PROTECTION OF, FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1937.)

Report of Board for Protection of Aborigines for the Year ended
30th June, 1937.

Office of Board for Protection of Aborigines,
Chief Secretary's Department,
(Bridge st. Entrance),
29th September, 1937.

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, 1936 to 30th June, 1937, 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.

Throughout New South Wales there are located at suitable centres Reserves for the use of Aborigines, some of such Reserves being under the supervision of the nearest Police. At centres, however, where the Aboriginal population and other conditions warrant, Aboriginal Stations have been organised under the management of resident officers, designated Managers and Matrons. There are twenty-one such establishments, where provision is made for the housing and care of the Aborigines on the lines of village communities.

The Manager, who also occupies the position of teacher, exercises a general control, sees to the housing, rationing, clothing and other temporal needs of the people, and is assisted by his wife, who interests herself in the home life of the women and children in particular.

At certain of the larger places the Manager has the help of an Assistant Manager and Assistant Matron.

The population of the Stations alone, totals over 3,000 persons, and for the past few years the Board has steadily pursued a policy of general improvement, as funds permitted, in the facilities of these Stations, by the installation of proper water supply, erection of additional dwellings, improved sanitation, and provision of Treatment Rooms in the charge of trained nurses, where eye disease and other complaints are dealt with.

The Board is also convinced of the needs for providing some facilities for social life among the people, and for this purpose has, on a number of the Stations, erected recreation halls where the aborigines may meet together for entertainment. The Board hopes to extend the use of these rooms as funds permit, with a view to making life on the Stations more attractive. In this connection the possibility is being explored of forming clubs or associations, to which the aborigines can belong, to cover

sport such as cricket and football, also activities embracing the home life of the people themselves and their social relationship one to the other. The formation of libraries, the encouragement of community singing, are suggestions which are receiving the Board's consideration.

The Board is also hopeful that sufficient funds will be placed at its disposal for the greater encouragement of manual training, particularly for youths, prior to their being placed in situations, and it is felt that a good deal might be done in this direction on the various Aboriginal Stations where manual training rooms with suitable equipment could be provided.

At one of its Stations located in the Pilliga Scrub the Board has established a sawmill, and large quantities of material are despatched to various centres for the construction of aborigines dwellings and administrative buildings. Apart from the fact that this material has been made available at a very reasonable cost for essential needs, the mill has enabled the Manager of the Station to give valuable training to quite a large number of men, who have later secured positions at good rates of wages with outside mills, and it is felt that development of this type of training is most desirable in furtherance of the policy of fitting the younger aborigines to merge into the general population of the State.

ABORIGINES RESERVES.

In addition to the Aboriginal Stations, there are Reserves located at centres of aboriginal population, which are under the supervision of the local Police, who see to the issue of rations, blankets, clothing, etc., on the Board's behalf.

At several of these Reserves there are Schools staffed by teachers appointed by the Education Department, some of whom receive a small allowance from the Board for acting as Matrons and interesting themselves in the welfare particularly of the women and children.

TRAINING HOMES.

Training Homes for girls and boys are maintained at Cootamundra and Kinchela, respectively. Each of these institutions is capable of accommodating about sixty inmates, most of whom are orphan or neglected children removed from the environment of camp life, educated and trained prior to being placed in situations under apprenticeship conditions.

Many hundreds of children have been dealt with in this manner and have afterwards settled down and established homes of their own, quite independently of the Board.

At Cootamundra the girls are, of course, given domestic training, while at Kinchela the boys are fitted for situations on farms and stations.

Proposals are now being considered to also give them training in certain trades, the whole idea being to fit them to compete on equal terms with white boys which, again, is in accordance with the decision reached at the Conference of Authorities representing aborigines protection in all the States of the Commonwealth, which met at Canberra in April last, to the effect that the ultimate destiny of these people is to merge into the general population.

Apart from Cootamundra and Kinchela Homes, there is also a Children's Home at Bomaderry, which is conducted by the United Aborigines Mission under the Board's supervision and into which younger children are received and cared for up to the age of ten years, when they are transferred to the other two Homes already mentioned. The inmates of this Home who are of school age attend the local public school, where, it is understood, they have a quite creditable record.

EDUCATION.

Special schools for aborigines have been established on the various Aboriginal Stations and upon certain Reserves, these schools being staffed with teachers appointed by the Department of Education, whose work is the subject of regular examination by the District School Inspectors, copies of whose reports are furnished to the Board.

It might be stated that the question of raising the standard of instruction in these schools by improving the syllabus is now the subject of consideration by the Department.

It is pleasing to note that many of the Board's Schools regularly enter exhibits at the District Agricultural Shows and invariably succeed in securing numbers of prizes, the manual work in particular being favourably commented upon.

HEALTH.

The health of the aborigines is provided for by their admission to all District Hospitals at a number of which special wards have been erected for their use. The services of local medical officers are also available and are requisitioned when required.

At all of the Aboriginal Stations a supply of drugs and dressings is maintained and numbers of the Board's Matrons are qualified nurses.

As already stated, Treatment Rooms have been erected at certain of the larger Stations and these are well-equipped for not only the outdoor treatment but also for the reception of bed patients.

The Stations and Reserves are occasionally visited by medical officers upon the staff of the Director General of Public Health and the Department of Education, and the Director General is hopeful that he may be able to extend the work in this direction, the whole matter, however, being dependent upon availability of staff. It is pleasing to report that during the twelve months there was not any serious case of sickness among the aborigines, the epidemic of eye disease which previously occurred at certain of the Aboriginal Stations being held in check.

HOUSING.

Attention is again drawn to the necessity for the provision of additional funds to enable the Board to provide adequate and comfortable housing for aborigines at many centres.

During the twelve months, new buildings were erected at Woodenbong, Yass, Roseby Park, Bellbrook and Cowra, while improvements and repairs were effected to dwellings, school buildings, etc., at a number of other centres.

The Board feels that the question of housing, water supplies, etc., is an urgent and important one and trusts that the provisions of funds will enable it to deal with this phase of its work in a comprehensive manner, as it is realised that it is useless to expect the aborigines to graduate from their old mode of living to the standard which might now reasonably be expected of them unless they can be given decent home conditions.

NUMBERS AND EXPENDITURE.

On the 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 858 full-bloods and 9,735 half-castes, a total of 10,593 (as compared with 10,860 the previous year), in the care and protection of whom an amount of £58,940 was expended (as compared with £57,265 the previous year), including items within the Votes of the Aborigines' Protection Board, the Departments of Public Health, Education, Government Stores and Resumed Properties.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, the Board again desires to express appreciation of the services and assistance rendered 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 has at all times been available.

Yours faithfully,

WM. J. MACKAY Chairman.

E. B. HARKNESS

ROY S. VINCENT

B. C. HARKNESS

E. SYDNEY MORRIS

H. J. BATE

G. E. ARDILL

GEO. A. MITCHELL

W. J. SCULLY

} Members, A.P. Board.