

1919.
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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 Institution for
Inebriates.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY COMMAND.

BRISBANE:

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1919.

C.A. 99—1919.

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

Home Secretary's Department,
Brisbane, 20th September, 1919.

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 AND INSTITUTION FOR INEBRIATES, DUNWICH (Medical Superintendent, Dr. J. Booth-Clarkson).

Aboriginals Department.—Information Contained in Report for the Year Ended 31st December, 1918.

The outstanding occurrence was the terrible cyclone in the Innisfail district, on 10th March, which completely demolished the Settlement at the Hull River, and caused the deaths of Mr. J. M. Kenny (the Superintendent) and his daughter.

Great assistance was rendered by Mr. E. J. Banfield, of Dunk Island, and Constable D. O'Regan, of Cardwell, who came, at great personal risk and difficulty, to the succour of the officials and inmates. To their prompt action in obtaining early relief for them we owe the saving of many lives, especially that of Mrs. Kenny, the matron, who was severely injured.

INSPECTIONS.

It was not possible, owing to the disaster at Hull River, to carry out the usual annual inspection of the Northern institutions and districts, as the work of selecting a fresh site for the Hull River Settlement and directing the initial work of transfer of the station took up the time which would otherwise have been available for inspection work.

The Settlements at Barambah and Taroom were visited, as often as the pressing work of central administration would allow, for the purpose of directing the social and industrial operations. Similar visits were also paid to the Mission at Purga to confer with the Mission officials.

LABOUR CONDITIONS ON LAND.

The demand for aboriginal labour remains strong, and there is no difficulty in providing employment for all able-bodied people (male and female) at better wages than have ever before been obtained.

The issue of the McCawley award made it necessary to revise the rates ruling for similar aboriginal labour to guard against unfair competition or circumvention of the Court's decision.

For some time also it has been evident that our people, and also the honest employers, have been at a great disadvantage, owing to the lack of any definite regulation of working conditions. The inexperienced protector was also frequently at a disadvantage, as, for lack of definite guidance on the question, he was constrained to accept what were palpably unsatisfactory conditions as being the recognised practice.

A complete set of regulations governing the whole question of wages and working conditions were, at the end of the year, being prepared and, at the time of writing, are now ready for issue.

Three Protectorates were subdivided, and 6 new Protectors appointed, the number now being 73. This subdivision of districts ensures closer supervision and more direct responsibility, besides lightening the machinery and facilitating business.

The total number of natives placed under agreement throughout the State was 3,886—males, 3,260; females, 626; and casual permits were issued for the temporary employment of 514 others. Reports regarding behaviour when in employment have generally been satisfactory, and very few cases have occurred where it has been necessary to proceed for breaches of agreement. Many employers, however, still hold too cheap an estimate of the value of aboriginal labour; and their treatment of him—so far as accommodation, food, and other working conditions are concerned—would, in some places, convey the impression that he is regarded more as a part of the stock or working plant than as a human being.

The Police Department employed the usual number of trackers, and it is pleasing to note that their pay has now been raised to a rate more in keeping with their value, and this should prove an inducement for the better class of men to enlist.

Two men enlisted with the Victorian Police.

LABOUR CONDITIONS ON BOATS.

The number of natives employed by the pearlshell and bêche-de-mer fleets in Torres Strait was 488, of which 277 were islanders and 211 mainlanders.

The wages earned by the island men amounted to £3,820, and by the mainlanders £1,050.

In addition to the above, 265 island men were working on their own "company" boats, of which particulars will be found in a later part of the report.

It is questionable, so far as the mainland native is concerned, if employment on the fishing fleets is of any material advantage to him. The wages earned, which averages about £1 per month per head, I am sure, does not compensate his family or himself for the physical and moral ills resulting from the abuses which this labour traffic leaves him open to. The miserable condition of the tribes on the East Coast of the Peninsula, from whom this labour is mostly drawn, bears eloquent testimony to the disabilities resulting from this employment.

INSURANCE AND COMPENSATION.

Claims were made, under "*The Workers' Compensation Act of 1916*," on behalf of aboriginal workers or their dependents, for 1 fatal and 22 non-fatal injuries.

For the fatal injury £300 compensation was received, and in the 22 non-fatal cases a total of £153 12s. 11d.

The disbursement of the money was supervised by the Department in order to ensure that the recipients derived the full benefits.

Compensation was also paid to the widow of the late J. M. Kenny, in respect of her husband's death and her own injury in the cyclone in March last.

ABORIGINAL TRUST ACCOUNTS.

The number of Savings Bank Accounts now in operation in trust for natives is 5,453, of which 1,091 are held in Brisbane for inmates of Settlements, and 4,362 by district protectors for

members of Camp tribes. These do not include the credit accounts possessed by inmates of Missions, at their own institutions, for home trading purposes.

These figures indicate a decrease of 611 accounts as compared with last year's figures; but this is accounted for by the fact that 666 inoperative accounts were, during the year, closed as unclaimed, after searching inquiry for the claimants, and placed to the Aboriginal Protection Property Account, which is administered for the general benefit of the aboriginals.

It will be seen, therefore, that there is really an increase of 55 accounts.

The total balance to credit of 4,626 accounts now is £107,729, of which £7,449 is owned by Settlement inmates. This exceeds last year's total by £16,944. The average works out at over £23 per head for Camp workers, and £6 16s. per head for Settlement inmates, the disparity being explained by the fact that the latter have more opportunity for spending their savings through the Retail Stores.

The wages collected and banked amounted to £43,406, being for Camp workers £37,401, and for Settlement people £6,045, exclusive of interests earned amounting to £3,408 and £225.

Their withdrawals were, respectively, £25,082 and £5,234.

Roughly calculated, the number of persons thus earning some portion of their living equalled about one-fourth of the native population.

HALF-CASTE SOLDIERS' AFFAIRS.

Immediately the military authorities decided to accept half-castes for active service, the Department took steps to extend its protection to the dependents of such men by controlling the military allotments of such as were wards of the Department.

The majority of these men now have quite creditable balances in the Savings Bank, which are accumulating for their benefit on return. One lad, who went to the Front in 1915, has now £246 to his credit.

In all, 62 men are known to have enlisted. Of these, 6 have made the great sacrifice, and 12 have been returned invalided. The number of men whose affairs were controlled through the Brisbane Office was 18; and, for these, military pay amounting to £1,396 16s. 6d. was collected and £150 10s. 10d. in private moneys due. Withdrawals for needs of relatives amounted to £238 3s. 7d., and £1,018 0s. 7d. represents the amount saved for them.

About an equal number of these soldiers, whose dependents were in other parts of the State, had their military pay controlled by the local Protectors or Police officers. In some cases, where it was seen that the men had made other satisfactory arrangements, no steps were taken to interfere.

AUXILIARY KETCH "MELBIDIR."

Early in the year the vessel proceeded to Brisbane for complete overhaul. After safely weathering the great cyclone, she was occupied for six weeks in assisting at the demolished Settlement at Hull River and in the establishment of the new Station on Great Palm Island.

In September the vessel returned to Thursday Island, where she was occupied for the remainder of the year in work around the Torres Strait Islands.

CERTIFICATES OF EXEMPTION.

Exemption was granted to 29 half-castes after full inquiry into their circumstances. Of these, 18 were males and 11 were females. Five applications were refused, the persons not being considered legally or otherwise eligible.

REMOVALS AND RECOGNIZANCES.

Permits were granted to 14 employers to remove their servants to other districts, and 34 bonds were entered into by these and travelling employers for the return of the natives removed to their own districts on completion of the engagement.

No cases of failure to fulfil the bonds entered into were reported.

FOOD AND OTHER RELIEF.

Regular relief rations were issued from thirty-one centres, the monthly amounts varying from £1 to £11.

In addition to the above, casual or emergency relief, amounting to £106, was also issued as need arose.

BLANKETS.

The allotment of blankets was based on the reports from the local Protectors of the requirements of their districts, thus ensuring every person entitled to the relief being provided for; the purchase and despatch being most satisfactorily undertaken by the Government Storekeeper.

Substitutes in the way of articles of clothing, fishing and hunting material, tobacco, &c., were also supplied, and were much appreciated by the recipients.

In addition to the balance from 1917, a total of 4,409 blankets (costing £1,228) and £239 worth of other goods were supplied to 1,417 men, 1,481 women, and 951 children, leaving a balance of 158 blankets on hand. The cost of packing and carriage was £72.

OFFENCES AGAINST ABORIGINALS— DRINK, OPIUM, AND OTHER ABUSES.

The following comparative table shows that offences against the Aboriginal Protection Acts are being kept fairly well in check by the Protectors. There is another marked decrease in opium offences, but an increase in supplying drink. Opium is still to be found in some districts, and there is no doubt the traffic is assisted very often by certain mean whites:—

Offences.	1917.		1918.	
	No.	Fines. £	No.	Fines. £
Assault	1	—	1	10
Harbouring	17	144	11	140
Illegal employment ..	14	59	24	169
Illegal recruiting ..	1	1	—	—
Possession of opium ..	31	322	29	271
Sale of poison	1	1	—	—
Supplying drink	25	530	36	775
Supplying opium	1	20	3	70

The issue of the new Poisons Regulations under the Health Acts has provided some long-needed machinery to deal with what were the most difficult of all offences to cope with—the supplying of such hypnotic drugs as morphine, cocaine, &c., which the wily alien substituted for the more risky opium traffic.

The alien, however, was not the only offender, for many country storekeepers made great trade in the supply of such drugs as chlorodyne, which found a ready sale at high prices to the natives addicted to its use.

The offences most difficult to detect and hardest to punish are prostitution and the consequent infection with venereal diseases. Unfortunately, the victims are often forced into this life of immorality through their unprotected condition and indigent circumstances.

The abuses practised upon the unprotected natives of the East Coast of Cape York Peninsula by the alien bêche-de-mer fishermen are still unchecked. Without means for proper patrol, it is impossible to supervise this recruiting; and there is little doubt but that wholesale exploitation, not only of men but of women and children, is frequently carried on, and the aboriginals are fast dying out as a result of the drink and drugs introduced.

The establishment of a Station on that coast for the protection of these poor people is urgently needed, as also is the establishment of a Lock Hospital at Fitzroy Island for the treatment of specific diseases.

OFFENCES BY ABORIGINALS.

The following comparative statement of offences for which aboriginals have been convicted speaks for itself:—

Offence.	1917.	1918.
Assault	5	9
Creating disturbance ..	3	9
Desertion from employment ..	7	3
Ship desertion	4	3
Drunkenness	87	88
Illegally on premises	5	3
Indecent exposure	1	1
Murder	1	—
Obscene language	1	13
Stealing	20	9
Suicide	1	—
Uncontrollable children ..	2	—

The absence of serious criminal offences is most gratifying.

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

	Men.			Women.			Children.			Total.
	No.	Fines. £	No.	No.	Fines. £	No.	Fines. £			
Settlements—										
Barambah	26	—	20	11	—	57	—	—	—	57
Taroom	18	—	7	11	—	36	—	—	—	36
Palm Island	23	—	15	9	—	47	—	—	—	47
Missions—										
Yarrabah	28	—	12	5	—	45	—	—	—	45
	95	—	54	36	—	185	—	—	—	185

A few of these deportees decamped and attempted to return to their old haunts, but the majority have settled down and shown improvement for the change.

No serious troubles or breaches of discipline beyond the usual tribal quarrels have occurred.

Occasionally, drink finds its way into the camp; but, by strict vigilance, this is kept in check. The most troublesome vice amongst them is gambling, to which most natives are peculiarly addicted.

HEALTH.

The health reports from the District Protectors are fairly satisfactory, especially in the Southern part of the State.

Epidemics of malaria visited the Mapoon Reserve, the Out-station at McIvor River, the Camps in the Lower Gulf country and on the East Coast as far south as Townsville, and at Murray Island in Torres Strait. It is reported that quite one-third of the primitive people of the Camps on the Endeavour River were wiped out by this visitation, yet the Cape Bedford Mission people escaped. Practically all the natives of North Queensland are, to some extent, affected with hookworm; and a campaign is being conducted by specialists, subsidised by the Government, for the treatment and eradication of this disease. Treatment is now being given to the inmates of the Missions and Camps in the vicinity of Cairns; and this Department is conferring with the specialists with a view to comprehensive action for dealing with the whole aboriginal population affected, as the camp native's very primitive sanitary ideas are prolific sources of infection.

There were slight outbreaks of beri-beri north of Rockhampton and at Mapoon Mission, and 14 patients from Torres Strait and Mapoon were treated in the Torres Strait Hospital for that complaint, which results usually from absence of proper vitumine foods.

Venereal was reported in the Gulf country, the Peninsula, the Torres Strait, and the far West; and in the last area phthisis was also noticeable.

As near as can be ascertained, 1,029 natives received treatment for various complaints at the country or settlement hospitals; but this does not include many who, especially on the Settlements, received daily out-patient treatment. In all, 366 deaths were reported, the principal causes being phthisis, pneumonia, venereal, heart failure, and senile decay. Twelve persons died either during or as a result of the cyclone on the old Hull River Settlement.

Against this, the birthrate, at least amongst those under supervision, was 237, of which 169 were full-bloods and 68 half-castes. These half-castes were not all illegitimate, the majority being the off-spring of parents of whom one or perhaps both were half-castes.

The only Missions visited by medical officers were Yarrabah and Purga. It would be of great benefit if regular medical inspection and treatment could be arranged for the Missions in the Gulf and the Island schools in Torres Strait.

The medical officer visited the Settlement at Barambah regularly, treating 407 patients in the hospital and a large number of out-patients. The maternity ward received 27 cases, and 19 patients passed through the lock ward. The medical officer speaks in high terms of the efficient work of the two European nurses; and they, in turn, praise the intelligent spirit and loyal help of the staff of native trainees under them.

The Settlement at Taroom for most of the year had no medical officer, but the nurse carried on most efficiently and zealously.

At the close of the year under review, there was no medical officer giving attention to Palm Island; but negotiations have been opened with the Government Medical Officer at Ingham, with the probability of an appointment.

The Brisbane General Hospital has, with its customary generosity, received serious cases from the Southern Settlements and Districts, which have required special treatment.

YOUNG WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

As already shown, 42 women and 31 children were rescued from the Camps and removed to Settlements, and 12 women and 5 children were also sent to Yarrabah Mission. The single women and most of the children were placed under supervision in the dormitories, where they would receive better care and nourishment.

The above do not include children committed to Aboriginal Homes under the State Children Act, nor others placed there voluntarily by the mothers.

The children now in Industrial Homes number as follows:—Sacred Heart Mission, Thursday Island, 15. Salvation Army Industrial Schools: (Girls) Yeronga, 15; (Boys) River-view, 3. Aboriginal Industrial Homes: Mapoon, 6; Purga, 14. The cost of maintenance of the above children was £467.

There is no record of tribal marriages, but 34 legal marriages were authorised. Of these, only 8 were to aliens, being:—European, 2; Maori, 1; Pacific Islanders, 3; Malay, 1; Fijian, 1; and 26 were to other aboriginals and half-castes, which can be regarded as a gratifying result of the Department's policy of restricting, as far as is reasonable, their mating with others than the men of their own race.

Two applications were refused—one by a Chinese, and the other by a person afflicted with venereal disease.

As far as possible, all semi-European half-caste mothers were assisted to obtain the maternity allowance and to wisely expend it for the purpose intended.

The number of girls now in service from the Brisbane Office, under the Protectors of aboriginal females, is 127, of whom 100 are half-castes and 27 full-bloods. Of these, 51 are employed in the city and suburbs, and 76 in the country.

The total wages collected on their accounts was £2,153; and of this £1,751 was expended in clothing, dentistry, holidays, &c. The number of accounts in operation is 143, with a credit balance of £3,773—an increase of £401 on last year's total, and averaging now over £26 per head.

Inspections of girls at their situations and of the maternity and children's homes were made as frequently as possible. The visiting Protector also did profitable work as buyer of women's and children's clothing for the Settlements. The demand for their services was keen; and there was no difficulty in obtaining work for every girl as soon as she became available. A few complaints of unsatisfactory accommodation and insufficient clothing were dealt with, but conditions were mostly found very satisfactory.

There were very few complaints as to behaviour in service; but 7 girls were confined of illegitimate children.

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS.

The following is taken from the report of the Protector at Thursday Island:—

“Operations were extended last year so as to bring the sale of produce, obtained by company boats from the Islands and Mainland, under the direct supervision and control of this Office. In pursuance of this, suitable temporary premises were secured, and a clerk and storeman was appointed.

“*Population.*—This year's census shows the total population of the Torres Strait Islands to be 2,446, a decrease of 15 on the figures for 1917. Ninety-six births were recorded, the sexes being—males, 49; females, 47. The deaths numbered 72, being—males, 37; females, 22; children, 13. The number of marriages was 23.

“*Health.*—The health of the natives throughout Torres Strait for 1918 has been good and an improvement on the previous year, with the exception of Murray Island, where sickness has been more prevalent, most of the cases being malarial fever caused by the early setting in of the north-west monsoonal rains. The deaths on Murray Island for the year were 19; this represents the highest for twenty years.

“In some of the villages in the islands there are old people suffering from various complaints which are difficult for the teachers to diagnose, and, in some cases, may be dangerous to the villages through contagion.

“*Schools.*—The attendance for the year has been regular, and the progress of the pupils satisfactory.

“The appointment of an assistant teacher at the Badu School has proved very beneficial, enabling the teacher more effectively to cope with the two schools under her control. The assistant, meanwhile, is gaining valuable knowledge which will prove useful, as in this way a trained teacher will immediately be available when a vacancy occurs on one of the islands.

“I regret having to report that the conduct of the native teachers on some of the islands has not been altogether satisfactory. Where native teachers are under the direct supervision of a

Government teacher, their work and conduct are good; but when left to themselves they lack moral responsibility. Several of the schools on the Island have the antiquated old earthen floors, which should be abolished and schools with wooden floors off the ground erected in their stead, which would be healthier for the children. When re-roofing or building new schools, slates or tiles in place of iron would prove far more durable and cheaper in the long run.

“As the teacher at Saibai has no means of visiting the Dauan and Boigu Schools, except by some passing lugger or cutter, his attendance at these islands is very irregular, and consequently the education of the children is being neglected.

“*Boats.*—The returns of the ten islands boats trading with this Office have far exceeded those of any previous year; the net value of the produce sold being £5,161 18s. 8d., as compared with £2,663 15s. 8d. in 1917. Of this, £3,567 represents the boats' catch, and £1,594 the value of passenger or share workers. The increase is attributed to the way in which the crews have worked, for they seem to be taking a much keener interest in their boats and realise that they are working for their own benefit. They have also learnt that the heavy cost of maintenance of the boats, together with the increased cost of living, demands an extra effort to make both ends meet. They also sold £217 worth of copra made on the islands; and the Murray Island natives donated £48 of their share towards the Red Cross funds.

“Mabuiag—previously looked upon as the worst island in the Strait as regards boat management and work—this year has come out top of the poll. Their old cutter ‘Uropi,’ which was taken from them owing to past mismanagement, has been returned to them as a reward. A new boat has been purchased for the Dauan people, who successfully worked the ‘Uropi’ for some time. Owing to the increased prices ruling for shell, the boats are all giving up fish and taking to pearl and trocus shell diving. The ten boats trading at Badu also show a marked improvement in the work they have done. Their catch of produce totals £2,702, and they succeeded in reducing their debts by £85.

“The Mosby Bros.—a half-caste family—are still working the ‘Yano’ and ‘Nancy’ on the half-share system through a local trading firm, their earnings totalling £1,068 during the year.

“The amount owing to this Office by the boats trading to the Papuan Industries, Limited, was £305.

“*Island Fund.*—Island Fund Collections for the year amount to £1,931, an increase of £932; and expenditure of £1,501, an increase of £538 on the figures for 1917.

“Owing to the dryness of the year and the appearance of a grub in the gardens, there has been a scarcity of food; consequently every island in the Strait has had to ask for assistance from their Island Funds. In those islands which have no depth of soil, the gardens seem to have been worked out, and to obtain any good results fertilisers will have to be resorted to. In one or two cases the natives have made their gardens on an adjoining island, and considerable time is thus lost in going backwards and forwards.

General.—Thirteen days were spent in patrol work during the year 1918, and a distance of 900 miles was covered as compared with 2,210 miles which took 54 days in 1917. The decrease in inspection work is due to the 'Melbidir' having been away from Torres Strait the greater part of the year. There was no regular means of communication with the islands, and the administration has been retarded considerably. Owing to the absence of the teacher, the Saibai, Dauan, and Boigu people have had no supervision over them for a considerable period. There is reason to believe that the Boigu people have been in the habit of going to and from the neighbouring Papuan villages without permits.

"It was reported that suspicious cases of influenza had appeared at Daru and in Dutch New Guinea; therefore the strictest precautions were necessary. Fortunately, the epidemic has not reached the islands. Several troubles of a serious nature amongst the natives, owing to the lack of communication, have had to be held over. Such matters should have immediate attention, as by delay the natives think that the Government will take no action, and that they can continue to transgress with impunity."

RESERVES.

The problem of what is to be the future of our aboriginals as a race will soon have to be seriously considered. At present about 4,000 are on reserves, of which 2,500 are under immediate control. The remaining 13,000 are scattered around the State, eking out a more or less precarious existence. Of these, about 4,000 are supporting themselves in employment, the balance being dependents, who live on what they receive from the earnings of the workers or by hunting and begging.

As pointed out in the report for the year 1916, the only thing to be said in favour of the present practice of placing the able-bodied in the labour market is that it, for the time being, solves for that portion the question of relief. But it cannot be said that it has resulted in much, if anything, in the way of the betterment of the race.

The worker is still practically a social outcast; and, instead of being sheltered and protected from the social evils and abuses to which he so easily falls a prey, he often finds himself overcome by influences too strong for him to resist, because of his utter lack of that moral support enjoyed by his white brother in better environments. His labour is mostly of a non-descript kind, and affords him no industrial standing. No attempt has been made by teaching him trades to pave the way to any higher plane, and practically no interest has been shown by those with whom he is associated in his social or spiritual welfare. In fact, his presence in the labour market has been, and is still, looked upon by many with hostility; and he is regarded, owing to the cheaper quality of his labour, as a stumbling-block to industrial progress.

While these conditions have existed his women-folk, for lack of a more natural provision for their welfare, have also had to be placed in service; but the valuable domestic training received has frequently unfitted the woman for the only legitimate future—marriage with her

own people; for the better living conditions and other attractions of civilisation have given her a taste for a life to which her natural mate has had no real opportunity to raise himself.

It must be admitted that the social and domestic conditions of the inmates of self-contained reserves is far in advance of those outside. The policy, which has been followed on the Mission Stations, of working towards economic self-dependence and social advancement can only be successfully fulfilled under conditions which enable complete segregation of the inmates from outside contamination.

It is also necessary for success that the resources, natural and financial, should be sufficient to allow unretarded industrial and economic progress; but the whole question depends on efficient and sympathetic control.

GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENTS.

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

Taroom (Superintendent, C. A. Maxwell).

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

Labour.—There has been a constant demand for aboriginal labour from these Settlements, especially from Barambah. The number of engagements entered into were:—Barambah, 254; Taroom, 83; Palm Island, 64. The wages paid are steadily improving, as high as 35s. being paid for station hands and 50s. for drovers. Conduct in employment has been generally satisfactory; and wages deductions have, with a few exceptions, been paid to the Settlements in accordance with the terms of agreement, though a few complaints have been received of failure to pay the pocket-money.

The wages deductions received on account of these workers amounted to £7,263 of which Barambah collected £5,050, Taroom £887, and Palm Island £1,326. Of this, £6,045 was banked to the credit of the earners, and £1,218 was paid to revenue as their contribution towards Settlement Maintenance. It is estimated that about £7,000 was drawn direct by the workers as pocket-money; and they afterwards received £5,234, from the portion banked, in store purchases and other needs. The money still to their credit is:—Barambah, £5,144; Taroom, £698; and Palm Island, £1,607. These savings earned £225 in interest during the year.

Health.—The health generally has been fairly good. At Barambah an epidemic of influenza broke out, 119 persons being affected; 67 developed pneumonia, 26 cases resulting fatally.

Outbreaks of whooping cough, measles, and pneumonia also claimed some victims on the Taroom Settlement. Venereal and ophthalmia were also in evidence at both these places, and there were a number of victims from tubercular complaints. At Palm Island 64 children and 15 adults were treated for hookworm with beneficial results.

The death roll is:—Barambah, 77; Taroom, 30; Palm Island, 11. At the old Hull River Settlement 15 deaths occurred as a result of the cyclone.

Taroom and Palm Island have laboured under the great disadvantage of having no regular medical assistance.

The births recorded were:—Barambah, 32; Taroom, 13; and Palm Island, 4.

Crime.—There is no serious crime to report. A few refractory inmates were punished for disobedience and absconding. A few also had to be arrested and removed as examples for more serious offences—in one case, for striking an official; and in another, for fomenting a strike because the local race-meeting was not made the occasion for a general holiday. The usual tribal quarrels had occasionally to be settled, this being prevented in one instance by a raid on the camp for weapons. Gambling is rife; but the Superintendent at Palm Island claims that he has practically stamped it out there.

Retail Stores.—The retail stores have proved of inestimable benefit in many ways to the inmates, as will be seen by the turnover, viz.:—Barambah, £3,197; Taroom, £995; Palm Island, £1,274. Free issues of necessaries to those unable to pay were made to the extent of £300. It is worth mentioning that the stock of edibles and clothing in the retail store proved the salvation of the stricken inmates and officials of the Hull River Settlement when it was demolished in the cyclone and no relief was possible for some days.

School.—Progress has been made as well as the very inadequate teaching accommodation made possible. A larger and more suitable building is urgently needed at Barambah, and school buildings are required at an early date for the other two settlements, where, so far, it has not been possible to provide any accommodation.

For this reason it has not been possible to appoint a separate teacher, as yet, for Palm Island. The teachers have done excellent work under the circumstances; and the children appear bright, clean, and healthy. Attention is being paid to proper nourishment of them, and this is found to result in a great improvement in mentality.

Industries.—It has been difficult to make the industrial progress desired; but every effort has been made to raise much-needed food crops. At Barambah, cultivation was increased to enable fodder for the stock to be grown; and the benefit of this was most marked in the improved condition of our stock, especially the working horses, during the trying winter. A fairly good supply of vegetables was also raised, proving a welcome addition to the food for the children and old people. Pig-breeding has been started with good stock from Dunwich, and these are thriving and increasing.

At Taroom, a severe winter and a protracted drought have tried the young trees of the orchard severely. Potatoes, pumpkins, corn, and melons were planted, but the drought proved too severe, although water was carted daily for irrigation. Two big bush fires also caused damage. Timber-cutting, fencing, clearing burr, building sheds, and general repair work have regularly occupied the available labour. The shearing resulted in 7 bales of wool, which brought £165. The teamster—a young half-caste—deserves praise for his handling of the

team during the drought, keeping up the hauling of supplies with very little outside help. Pear-clearing, by digging and burning, has gone on steadily; but the pest cannot be eradicated by this method.

At Hull River, a cyclone in March demolished a fine plantation of 6,000 banana plants and several hundred citrus and other fruit trees, as well as many acres of potatoes, pine-apples, and other vegetables and fruits, also tobacco and coffee. The station was afterwards transferred to Palm Island, where 30 acres of forest land have been cleared and burnt off, and 8 acres prepared for orchard purposes. A plantation of 250 bananas has been planted, and 200 seed cocoanuts have been placed in nursery.

Fifteen acres of scrub have also been cleared, and planted with pumpkins and other vegetables. Such good supplies of fish, dugong, and turtle have been caught that the meat supply has become unnecessary.

Stock.—At Barambah, the cattle number 410. There were numerous losses, owing to the severe winter and the drought; and, as it was possible to augment the beef supply by killing some of the stores, this further reduced the number.

The horses number 17, including 10 draughts, 3 buggy and 4 saddle horses.

At Taroom, the cattle numbered 102, of which 28 were working bullocks and 17 milkers. The sheep suffered heavily from fly, the effects of the drought, and from a sudden flood on the Dawson. The last muster was 405. A number were killed by natives' dogs, and all these dogs have now been destroyed.

The six horses at Hull River were sold after the cyclone, and a plough horse has been purchased from Ingham for the new station at Palm Island. There are no cattle.

Administrative Buildings.—Owing to the closing of the sawmill at Barambah, it was only possible to build a new teacher's quarters and some minor additions that were required at the children's homes. A much-needed water supply service has been installed, and laid on to all quarters and to the camps. The slaughter-yards and milking-sheds have been removed to a more retired and suitable site. The hardwood for three cottages for the new settlement at Palm Island was also supplied from the stock at the Barambah sawmill, which, at the close of the year, were in process of erection. More buildings are still required, for all these settlements, to enable efficient work to be done.

Social Improvement.—Very little progress in this direction can be reported, as practically nothing could be done owing to lack of funds last year. The skilled building labour had, perforce, to be dispensed with, as such necessary building material as iron, joinery, &c., were a prohibitive price. Social reforms are quite impracticable while the native is denied the opportunity of raising himself from the degrading environments of camp life.

I could not close this part of the report without paying a tribute to the memory of Mr. John Martin Kenny, late Superintendent of Hull

River Settlement, who lost his life in the terrible cyclone of the 10th March, 1918, which entirely demolished that institution; and in which disaster Mr. Kenny's young daughter was also killed, and his wife (the matron) seriously injured.

In Mr. Kenny's death the Department suffered a severe loss, for the deceased was an officer with a wide and life-long experience of aborigines, gained by years of service in the Northern Native Police, and as an industrial missionary at Cape Bedford Mission. He was a man of fine character, strong personality, and indomitable courage. His whole heart was in his work and his people, whose absolute confidence and respect he enjoyed; for he shrank from no sacrifice of health or comfort in the earnestness of his desire to better their conditions. He was a loyal and zealous officer, and was esteemed by all who came into contact with him.

A case worthy of special mention is that of the remnants of the old Seven Rivers and Red Island tribes, who, practically unaided and of their own volition, have established for themselves a small settlement on Small River, near Cape York. A neat little village of bark huts has been built; and gardening, fishing, &c., are carried on with creditable success. The Protector at Thursday Island reports:—"The whale-boat supplied to the Small River Settlement has proved a great success. The Councillors and Police are taking great interest in the boat, and are looking after it well. They are now able to pay periodical visits to Thursday Island, and sell the products from their own gardens, such as pumpkins and bananas. Besides fishing for their own needs, they also sell oysters. The possession of the boat seems to make them far more settled and contented. A small portion of their earnings is paid into a Boat Account towards the maintenance of the vessel."

With the opening of the new station at Palm Island, the opportunity was taken to lay out the native village on a proper town-planning system and direct the erection of native quarters on orderly and hygienic lines. A neat and picturesque village of thatch-roofed cottages has sprung up, with surveyed roads and uniform allotments, many of these little homes boasting neat gardens and poultry runs. The benefit of these more civilised conditions has been apparent in the very noticeable improvement in the home life and a generally higher moral tone.

Religious Instruction.—At Barambah and Taroom, the local Church of England clergymen have conducted services and classes for religious instruction with the assistance of the officials. The Salvation Army have also occasionally treated the Barambah inmates to a bright open-air service with band music.

The officials report a gratifying interest in these services, and an endeavour on the part of some inmates to live up to these teachings—a task the difficulties of which can only be understood by those acquainted with their character and present conditions of life.

Recreations.—Every assistance possible, in the way of sporting material, games, &c., was given, to meet the great need for healthy and innocent recreation, to enable the vices of gambling, &c., to be combated. Hunting, fishing, and native corroborees were also encouraged. At

Christmas and New Year the usual sports, picnics, and feasts were provided and a generous distribution of toys and serviceable Christmas presents was made.

MISSIONS.

Yarrabah, Cairns (Superintendent, S. Lyons, 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. N. Hey).

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

Aurukun, 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.—Reports from the Mission Stations are generally very satisfactory. Conduct has been good, no serious crime being reported. All stations speak of a contented spirit apparently prevailing and very little tendency to abscond; the Missionary at Mitchell River remarking that the people appreciate the assured comfort of the Mission to the uncertainties of camp life.

Some unsettlement has been caused by recruiters trying to entice the young men away from the Reserves in the Gulf for work on the fishing fleets. One boat decoyed four men away from Mapoon, but was compelled to return them. The Mornington Island natives have apparently quite settled down, and have given no further trouble. At Weipa, the men have earned a word of praise for the loyal way they helped and supported their new superintendent.

Health.—Health, generally, has been good, with the exception of some slight epidemics of malaria, influenza, and beri-beri. Hookworm disease was prevalent on most Northern Missions. Few of these stations received any medical visits.

Most stations report a gratifying increase of births over deaths, which is due directly to the cleaner and more protected life of their people. The Missionary at Aurukun, however, regrets that there were no births among the young married couples, and he is given to understand that they practise race suicide by the use of a root found in the bush.

Instruction.—At all stations school has been regularly conducted, and religious instruction has been given in conjunction with the secular branches. At Aurukun and Cape Bedford, some of the bush natives have voluntarily handed over their children to receive care and training, and these children have taken kindly to the new conditions. Steady progress has been made, and most Missions report good results of the policy of specialising in manual and domestic, as well as technical, branches. It has made it possible to settle numbers of the young people, when old

enough to marry, in little homesteads of their own, where they can, and do, put into practice the training received.

All reports are enthusiastic as to the earnest interest displayed in religious teachings. Church attendances are very regular, and the people show devotion to their religion.

At McIvor River, where the tribe only a few years ago were "myalls," they have their church services regularly conducted by one of the advanced boys. To their religious training the missionary at Cape Bedford attributes the changed spirit which enables them to settle down, with steady good conduct, to honest work, in spite of the temptations of the neighbouring camps.

A young married couple (inmates of Aurukun) also volunteered for service in the mission at Mornington Island, after the murder of the late Superintendent, and proved themselves very useful. The full value of this action can only be realised when we remember what dangers and fears a strange country holds for the mind of these simple people.

Industrial.—Reports are fairly satisfactory regarding the results of the industrial operations, particularly the food-producing branches, to which special attention had to be paid owing to the high cost of provisions.

At Aurukun, it was not possible to accept all the people who offered themselves as workers, for the above reason. Fortunately, there was an abundance of game and fish. Eighteen acres of heavily timbered land were cleared, and 12 acres planted with sweet potatoes which yielded 60 tons, the remaining 6 acres being planted with cassava for the coming year. Three acres of potatoes were planted by the inmates as private gardens, but the bush people bandicooted them.

Three new native cottages were built, and an effort is being made to provide a sawmilling and water-pumping plant.

At Mapoon the return from the native gardens was above the average; and the people did well in their trading with copra, bêche-de-mer, pineapples, bananas, and sweet potatoes. Much of their produce was, of course, consumed on the various settlements; but £419 worth went through the Mission Co-operative Store. A much larger amount than this was sold in Thursday Island, and the proceeds spent there by the people without passing through the Mission Store.

The Mission stock comprises 180 head of mixed cattle, 20 horses, and 3 mules. Forty-four fat bullocks were sold, and 16 killed for beef. There was a plentiful supply of milk for the young and sick. The coconut plantation was also extended.

At Weipa, owing to the break between the departure of the previous Assistant Superintendent and the appointment of Mr. R. P. Hall, all productive work has been at a standstill, and there was no food crop grown beyond that in some small kitchen gardens. Mr. Hall grappled with a discouraging situation in a whole-hearted manner, and, with the loyal help of the people, made quite surprising improvement by the end of the year. A good quantity of sandalwood has been collected for sale, and a good water supply obtained by damming the creek. The few cattle and horses were in good condition.

At Cape Bedford, the outstation at McIvor River has demonstrated that the full-blood aboriginal can be trained to husbandry, for the members of what, only a few years ago, was a primitive camp are now working a communal farm, without white supervision, and supplying part of the food needs of the head station. Besides supporting themselves they fattened about 50 pigs, and sent 12 tons of sweet potatoes to Cape Bedford; and this was done in spite of a severe outbreak of malaria which affected all hands on the farm.

The head station raised about 40 tons more of potatoes, £31 worth of peanuts, and £11 worth of pigs. The corn crop was not a success. They also raised 9,000 pineapples, and made half a ton of copra. Three hundred coconuts have been planted at the Elim Outstation, and 7 tons of bêche-de-mer were cured and sold.

A good number of calves were branded, and 7 bullocks were killed for beef. Twenty stores are nearly ready for sale. The cattle boys have made a home in the middle of the run, near good water, and have commenced a fruit garden as an experiment.

At Monamona, £500 worth of food has been raised, all of which was used for home consumption. Ten acres of scrub land have been stumped, and 50 acres of forest land brushed and sown with grass. Two miles of fencing have also been erected.

The cattle now number 126, including 26 milkers. There are also 2 teams of 26 bullocks each.

At Yarrabah, about £2,000 worth of food products was raised and consumed. Two thousand young coconuts were added to the plantations along the coast, and 3,000 more in nursery awaiting rain. One ton of cotton was also grown, and a larger crop is expected next year. Experimental culture of the castor oil plant is also being made.

The establishment of a sawmill is being considered to provide employment for the inmates in timber-working, furniture-making, &c., and to meet the institution's needs for improvements.

As evidence of the value of the industrial training from school, it is pointed out that one out-station is entirely in control of a full-blood aboriginal, who has four families and three single men under him. Another man, trained as a foreman builder, is erecting a two-storied building, 120 ft. by 40 ft., and is correctly working to plan. Others have been trained as blacksmiths, tinsmiths, sawyers, carpenters, joiners, &c., and do good work with very crude tools. Without even a bullock team and with only a home-made milling plant, they cut, hauled, and milled about £200 worth of timber for home improvements. They build their own homes and construct their own furniture, making well-formed serviceable articles.

At Trubanaman, there are now 800 head of cattle, including 15 milkers and 12 killers; and last year 160 calves were branded. The stock also comprises 130 goats and 20 fowls.

A new farming settlement has been formed on the Magnificent River, a branch of the Mitchell, where good soil has been found. A few of the men have engaged on neighbouring stations for short periods to earn wages.

At Purga, there are 50 acres under the plough; and, at the beginning of the year, good quantities of maize were sold, but the dry weather spoilt the later crops. Eleven cattle and 9 pigs were sold, and 3 pigs killed for food.

A large dray-shed, 50 ft. by 12 ft., was built; and £50 worth of fencing erected. The stock comprised 11 horses, 33 head of cattle, and 13 pigs, of a total value of £370.

Social.—There is a generally optimistic tone throughout the Mission reports as to the social progress being made. It is claimed that "the native Australian is capable of high development, that when you have discovered what interests him you have as good material for producing an efficient worker as you could get under any white skin. Those who believe the aboriginal is only a rover should visit the villages at such missions as Yarrabah, Mapoon, and Cape Bedford, where families, without more than casual supervision, are farming all the year round, living in clean, comfortable, and well-ordered houses, and rearing families that often average double the birth-rate of European countries. There was not much encouragement for motherhood under the old nomadic conditions, but once settled in homes, with regular food and decent conditions, the families increase and produce sturdy, healthy children."

A convincing piece of evidence that even the primitive native is beginning to recognise the benefit of this improved order of things may be found in the account, by the Missionary at Aurukun, of visits that have been paid lately by the myall people of the Kendall River, who, this year, for the first time in knowledge, brought their women with them and offered to stay and work. They asked wistfully when was someone coming to "make mission" for them; and, though it may be their visions, at present, are mostly of the material benefit to be gained, it is to be hoped that in the near future it will be possible to grant their appeal. They were sent home happy with presents of flour, tobacco, and prints.

Before concluding, I desire to place on record the Department's appreciation of the long and valuable services rendered by the Rev. N. Hey, Superintendent of Mapoon, who, owing to indifferent health, is retiring from the Mission which he founded twenty-seven years ago.

During that time he has served under five Chief Protectors and seven Local Protectors; and it is fitting that we should testify to the great work done by this pioneer missionary and his wife, often under great trials and discouragements, for the uplifting of the aboriginal race. With Mr. and Mrs. Hey must be mentioned Mrs. Ward, who, for nearly the whole of that time,

was associated with them, and who was also compelled to retire some time ago through ill-health. Mr. Hey's long experience and intimate knowledge of the native character have made him an authority on the question of the betterment of the aboriginal, and he has always most willingly and loyally co-operated with the Department in its efforts to ameliorate their conditions.

It is to be hoped that this valuable knowledge will, for many years, be still available for the guidance of the Mission organisation with which he has so long been associated.

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, 1917	519	19	0
Estates Deceased Aboriginals	1,415	12	2
Wages of Deserters	25	16	6
Unclaimed Bank Balances	2,639	16	2
Redemption Island Boat Loans	219	11	0
Interests—Settlement Joint Accounts	225	5	8
Sale of Piles—Barambah Mill Account	24	10	0
Adjustment Cancelled Cheque	10	17	6
Refund—Temporary Loans Advance Account	130	0	0
Refund—Barambah Mill Account	14	17	6
Various Refunds—Clothing, &c.	21	10	7
		£5,247	16	1
<i>Disbursements.</i>		£	s.	d.
Sawmill Plant—Barambah Settlement (part)	692	3	8
Water Service—Barambah Settlement (part)	104	19	0
Water Service—Taroomb Settlement (part)	88	11	2
Aboriginal Patriotic Display	54	2	8
Clothing and Rations to Destitute	139	10	2
Christmas Goods—Settlement Interest Account	153	13	4
Fishing Net—Small River Tribe	6	10	0
Dinghy—Hull River Settlement	19	12	6
Artificial Arm—Myora Native	8	0	0
Medical Treatment—Sick Native	9	2	6
Payment for Sheep—Killed by Aboriginals' Dogs	15	0	0
Burials of Destitute Natives	19	11	6
Refunds to Relatives—Deceased's Estates	263	15	8
Temporary Loans—Advance Account	145	0	0
Miscellaneous	10	16	10
Balance	3,517	7	1
		£5,247	16	1

The estimated aboriginal population at end of the year was 16,500, and the total expenditure on relief was £31,289.

The collections, including wages and earnings of aboriginals, sales of produce of fishing vessels, settlements, &c., amounted to £69,121.