

1921.
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QUEENSLAND.

REPORT

UPON THE

OPERATIONS OF THE SUB-DEPARTMENTS

OF

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

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY COMMAND.

BRISBANE:

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1921.

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

Home Secretary's Department,
Brisbane, 12th September, 1921.

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).
DUNWICH BENEVOLENT ASYLUM (Medical Superintendent, Dr. J. Booth-Clarkson).
INEBRIATE INSTITUTION, DUNWICH (Medical Superintendent, Dr. J. Booth-Clarkson).
BRISBANE HOSPITAL (Medical Superintendent, Dr. J. B. McLean).
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).
WESTWOOD SANATORIUM (Visiting Medical Officer, Dr. D. P. O'Brien).
GOVERNMENT RELIEF (Officer in Charge, D. A. Hogan).
PRISONS (Comptroller-General, A. T. Peirson).

Aboriginals Department.—Information contained in Report for the Year ended 31st December, 1920.

As in 1919, the principal feature was an outbreak of pneumonic influenza, this time in Torres Straits and Cape York, which attacked the white as well as the coloured population. All communications and supplies were completely dislocated and, but for the timely arrival of medical help and food from the South, matters would have gone hard with the stricken people.

It is gratifying to speak again of the loyal behaviour of all members of the administration and to express appreciation of the great assistance given by the mission staffs and various public bodies.

Considerable obstruction in administration, especially affecting Northern districts and settlements, was caused through the prolonged shipping strikes. Delays in transport of blankets and relief caused much hardship to the natives in those localities.

INSPECTIONS.

It was again found impossible to make any inspection of the Northern institutions, the shipping difficulty being the principal obstacle.

Periodical inspections were made of the Southern settlements.

LABOUR CONDITIONS ON LAND.

The demand for aboriginal labour is good in practically all districts, especially for stock work. The wages under the new Regulations are readily paid, and the stricter conditions as regards accommodation, supervision of wages, expenditure, &c., appear to give very little trouble in the enforcement.

In the Coen district, employment has slackened, as the principal industry, sandalwood cutting, is decreasing, and at Ingham the sugar award has practically shut aboriginal labour out of that industry.

The total number of natives placed under agreement was 3,440 (males 2,782, females 658), and permits were issued for the casual employment of 243 males and 82 females.

Reports of behaviour were generally satisfactory.

Six new protectorates were formed—Einaleigh, Forsayth, Kidston, Mount Surprise, Eromanga, and Malanda, the number of district protectors now being eighty.

Eighty-nine trackers were employed by the Police Department and two were also sent to Victoria. The wages of these men were increased to a rate more in keeping with labour outside.

LABOUR CONDITIONS ON BOATS.

The number of natives employed in the pearlshell and bêche-de-mer fisheries in Torres Straits was 481, of whom 318 were islanders and 163 mainlanders. The wages earned by these amounted to £6,620, of which £4,220 was paid to the islanders and £2,400 to the mainland men. This was an increase of £1,270 on 1919 earnings.

About 250 islanders were engaged working their tribal "company" boats and won £13,970, including £1,124 for pearls won and stored during the war years.

This is a decrease on last year's results, for which the influenza epidemic in the early part of the year and the great fall in values of marine produce were responsible.

For the same reason the intended revision of wages rates was held over.

At Cooktown 94 mainlanders were engaged in the bêche-de-mer and trochus shell industry, the wages conditions being similar to those obtaining at Thursday Island.

INSURANCE AND COMPENSATION.

Claims under the Workers' Compensation Acts were made for twelve accidents to aborigines, and compensation amounting to £78 13s. 2d. was awarded. There were no fatal accidents.

The compensation in each case was paid through, and the disbursement controlled by, the Protector of the district.

ABORIGINAL TRUST ACCOUNTS.

The number of savings bank accounts now held in trust for the natives is 6,250, of which 1,237 are for natives in the settlements and 130 for girls in service from Head Office.

The remainder, 4,883, are controlled by the various District Protectors for the aborigines in their districts.

The above numbers do not include the trust accounts or store credits of inmates of the various missions.

This shows an increase of 105 accounts. The total balance to credit is £160,318, of which £8,940 is owned by settlement inmates. This exceeds last year's total by £28,903, and the average credit per head is now £25 10s.

The wages deductions banked amounted to £92,822, and the interest earned, £4,835, shows an increase of £30,980 on the previous year.

The withdrawals for clothing and various other needs totalled £56,386.

HALF-CASTE SOLDIERS' AFFAIRS.

The arrangement between the military authorities and the Department for the control of the military pay of half-caste soldiers during the war proved so successful that a similar arrangement was readily agreed to with regard to the custody of the war gratuity bonds.

All claims from these men were first submitted to this office and, where deemed necessary, the gratuity was paid to the Protector of the district as trustee. In all but three cases the gratuity was paid in cash, the claims of these men to the benefit of the necessitous circumstances clause being sympathetically viewed by the War Gratuity Board.

Payments, in cash, were made in 14 cases, to amounts totalling £590, and of three bonds to a value of £81 18s. to the Protector as trustee, and in 24 other cases the men were allowed to draw the gratuity direct after inquiry into their circumstances and fitness to manage for themselves.

It is gratifying to be able to state, at the satisfactory completion of what proved to be an undertaking of considerable importance, that the results, from the point of view of benefit to the half-caste soldier and his dependents, more than justified the great amount of work involved and the pardonable pride felt that, in the performance of this work, the Department was doing its part, and one of no inconsiderable value, in the patriotic work of the Great War.

To whatever was achieved in the work, the unfailing courtesy and sympathetic co-operation of the Defence Department and its district pay officers, and also of the members of the War Gratuity Board, contributed in no small degree.

AUXILIARY KETCH "MELBIDIR."

The vessel has not left Torres Straits during the year. During the influenza epidemic she was occupied in relief work around the islands and the mainland, conveying food and supplies and medical parties to the various villages and camps.

Owing to engine troubles, much of the patrol work in later months in the year was done under sail.

CERTIFICATES OF EXEMPTION.

Applications for exemptions were made by 144 half-castes, and in 79 cases (71 males and 8 females) certificates were granted.

All applications were strictly reviewed and only granted where the claimant was shown to be eligible for freedom.

REMOVALS AND RECOGNIZANCES.

Bonds were entered into for the temporary transfer of 32 natives from their own to other districts, and in all cases the natives concerned were satisfactorily returned.

FOOD AND OTHER RELIEF.

Regular relief rations amounting to £1,359 were issued from thirty-one centres, in monthly allowances of from £1 to £13.

Temporary relief amounting to £107 was issued where necessary, and £98 was spent in medicine and medical assistance to the distressed Torres Straits and Peninsula natives during the influenza epidemic.

BLANKETS.

Blankets were issued, as usual, on the requisition of the local Protectors and Superintendents of Institutions, to 1,188 men, 1,097 women, and 835 children. The total number issued was 3,960.

Where likely to be more suitable, such articles as clothing, material, tent flies, knives, tomahawks, fishing lines, &c., were issued in lieu of, or in addition to, the blankets.

The cost of the blankets and other goods was £2,310, and the packing and carriage expenses £84.

The Government Storekeeper again carried out the purchase and despatch, but, as in 1919, 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.	1918.		1919.		1920.	
	No.	Fines.	No.	Fines.	No.	Fines.
		£		£		£
Assault	1	10	..	..	..	..
Harbouring	11	110	2	20	7	48
Illegal employment ..	24	169	8	58	6	16
Illegal recruiting ..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Possession of opium ..	29	271	28	241	46	392
Sale of poison .. ..	..	..	1	10	..	..
Supplying drink ..	36	775	16	325	5	130

OFFENCES BY ABORIGINALS.

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

Offences.	1918.	1919.	1920.
Assault	9	9	..
Creating disturbance ..	9	6	..
Desertion from employment ..	3	..	4
Ship desertion	3	25	2
Drunkenness	88	20	23
Illegally on premises ..	3	2	..
Indecent exposure	1	..	..
Murder .. .. .	..	5	..
Obscene language	13	11	1
Stealing	9	3	1

REMOVALS.

The number 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	25	16	17	58
Taroom	9	7	15	31
Palm Island	109	55	25	189
<i>Missions—</i>				
Yarrabah	8	1	4	13
Cape Bedford .. ..	..	..	1	1
Purga	1	..	2	3
	152	79	64	295

HEALTH.

Health reports are generally satisfactory, but a severe outbreak of pneumonic influenza occurred in Torres Straits and Cape York camps, in the early part of the year, which affected over 3,000 natives and resulted in the death of 96. The native camps at Cape York contained about 200 people, of whom 32 died.

The strict precautions taken to prevent the spread of the epidemic, by prohibiting recruiting and other intercourse between native camps and vessels from the affected area, proved effective,

but, as indicating the terrible possibilities if such precautions had been neglected, I would mention that two natives, who had deserted from one of these vessels, made their way, in a stolen boat, to the camps at Port Stewart, the result being an outbreak there causing ten deaths.

The Hookworm Campaign specialists have been actively prosecuting their investigations, and have given a good deal of attention to aboriginal centres. Staffs were occupied at Barambah and Palm Island settlements and also at several Northern mission stations and camps.

The native, by reason of his primitive habits and ideas of sanitation, is not only peculiarly susceptible to infection, but an active agent in the spread of the germs. As a result of the advice of the specialists concerned, improved sanitary systems and water supplies have been inaugurated with the object of stamping out the disease.

Ordinary influenza showed itself in the Southern districts and claimed some victims, and at Barambah a number of cases of "beriberi" were treated, mostly of new arrivals from other districts.

Venereal disease was in evidence in the Gulf and Border districts, and there is no doubt of its prevalence throughout the whole of Cape York and the Peninsula coasts. Cases were also treated at Townsville, Ingham, Cardwell, Babinda, Cooktown, and Charters Towers.

The total number of deaths reported from all causes was 310, of which 105 occurred in the Somerset district, principally from pneumonic influenza.

The number of births reported was 240. These figures cannot be accepted as complete, as births and deaths in distant camps cannot be reliably recorded.

YOUNG WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

During the year 78 women and 57 children were removed to the different settlements, and one woman and seven children to mission stations, where it will be possible to protect them from exploitation and afford them proper attention and training.

It was not possible to keep a record of tribal marriages, but twenty-four legal marriages were authorised. Of these seventeen were to other half-castes and aboriginals, and seven only to aliens—viz., European 3, Cingalese 2, and Pacific Islanders 2. In nearly every case the women married to aliens were half-breeds.

The Department is still firmly discouraging the marriage of full-bloods to aliens.

All European half-caste mothers were assisted to obtain the maternity bonus, and 31 claims were filed. Of these, twenty-two went through Head Office and nine through the district Protectors.

In all cases the Department has supervised the expenditure.

The number of girls under agreement from Head Office is 123, of whom 39 are employed in the town and suburbs, and 84 in the country. Of these, only 24 are full-bloods.

The Department is still pursuing, as far as possible, the policy of restricting the employment of girls in the city, and during the year the number has been reduced by 13.

The total number of savings bank accounts owned by these girls is 130, with a credit balance of £3,571, averaging £27 9s. 6d. per head. The total wages collected on their behalf was £2,649, and withdrawals amounting to £2,971 were allowed, which were spent on clothing, dentistry, holidays, &c. The average withdrawal per head was £22 15s. The increase in this expenditure was due to the higher prices of clothing, &c.

The Female Protector has been fully occupied in the supervision of the above expenditure for the girls and in buying for the various settlement retail stores, which has left very little time for the inspection of the girls in their places of employment.

Little trouble, however, was experienced, as regards their behaviour, and the absence of complaint as to accommodation, treatment, &c., can be attributed to the wholesome effect of the Employment Regulations of 1919, which clearly define the duties and responsibilities of the employer.

The demand for the services of these girls still far exceeds the supply, and no difficulty is found in placing them. A proof that these girls are worth the wages demanded is, that the majority of employers are anxious to renew their agreements from year to year.

The children in industrial homes number 55, and are distributed as follows:—Sacred Heart Mission, Thursday Island, 16; Salvation Army Industrial School, Yeronga, 12 girls; Riverview, 5 boys; Aboriginal Industrial Homes—Mapoon, 7; Purga, 15.

The total cost of maintenance of the children was £844.

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS.

An abnormal outbreak of influenza during the first three months absorbed all the time and energies of the staff, and dislocated all ordinary administration. The sensational fall in values of all marine produce, and the shipping trouble also, rendered the work of the office at times very difficult.

The census returns of the islands show a decrease of 6, the figures being 2,444, as against 2,450 for the previous year. Eighty-three births were recorded, and 105 deaths. This must be considered highly satisfactory in view of the influenza epidemic.

Schools.—The reports from the Government teachers for the year echo the effects of the epidemic. Loss of time through sickness naturally retarded the progress of the scholars, but the teachers recognised this and report satisfactory attendances and efforts to redeem the time as far as possible.

Aragu, the native teacher at Cocoanut Island, died on the 15th September. He was an earnest and enthusiastic teacher, and did good work in that position.

Island Funds.—Island Fund collections for the year amount to £2,608, a decrease of £340, and expenditure £3,759, an increase of £2,181 on the figures for 1919. The influenza outbreak was responsible for heavy incursions into these funds. Food and medicine were urgently requested from all the islands and, at times, abnormal prices had to be paid to get necessities.

Approximately £2,000 was expended from these funds in this way. The Government, from its Influenza Vote, granted an amount of £98 towards the cost of medicine and nursing attention.

Repairs to island boats have in the past been financed by loans from these funds, and at present £1,771 is out on loan to the boats in this way.

These loans are redeemed from the vessel's earnings, and the native crews cheerfully agree to liquidating the debt in this way.

As far as has been possible, each Island Fund has met its own boat repairs, but occasionally other Island Funds have assisted with temporary loans.

The influenza relief was a heavy drain, and the funds are at a low ebb, the combined balance now being £2,382.

Island Company Boats.—The returns of the island boats working through the Protector's office showed a decrease of £1,585 19s. The influenza epidemic greatly disorganised the working of the boats, in some instances for many months. An even more important factor was the heavy fall in prices of all classes of marine produce.

The total marine produce sold was £6,223, of which £2,355 was won by "passengers," as they call working from shore. Of this, £3,427 was paid in cash to the fishermen, £876 was spent in stores and gear, and £1,920 was banked to savings accounts, boat redemptions, or Island Funds.

Pearls won during the war and held for steady market were sold by tender and realised a further £1,124.

The ten vessels working through the Papuan Industries earned £5,178, and, of this, £571 was banked, £240 paid to Island Funds, and £55 to boat stores account. The balance, after paying redemption instalments, was divided amongst the fishermen.

Three other native boats, working independently, earned £1,709.

During the whole of 1919 values were steadily on the increase. Trochus shell reached £130 per ton, blacklip shell £54 per ton, and M.O.P. shell £270. At the close of 1920, prices ruling for the items mentioned were:—Trochus shell £38 per ton, blacklip shell £14 per ton, and M.O.P. shell £123. All classes of bêche-de-mer rose and fell in a similar manner. Still lower prices are predicted for 1921. This depression comes at a most unfortunate period for the company boats. Many of the boats are very old and have had much patching or tentative repairs and, in several cases, must be either thoroughly overhauled or abandoned. The "Sissy," of Stephens Island, "Yama," of Yam Island, and "Poruma," of Cocoanut Island, have been thoroughly overhauled, the work being done under the direction of the harbour-master.

The Murray Islanders have now been allowed to regain possession of their boat, the "Miriam," taken from them over six years ago for not satisfactorily working her.

The Mosby Brothers, a half-caste family, have voluntarily transferred the agency for their vessels, the "Yano" and "Nancy," to the Protector's Office. This will increase the number of boats operating through the Government Store to twelve during 1921.

The Influenza Epidemic of 1920.—Nearly 75 per cent. of the aboriginal population (mainlanders and islanders), of approximately 5,000, had the sickness more or less severely. That only 96 deaths were recorded speaks volumes for the efforts made for the relief of the sufferers. Under ordinary circumstances this would have been a tremendous task, but it fell at a time when the Straits were denuded of all that was most urgently needed.

Food of all kinds, sick comforts, and medicines were unprocurable during the early stages. The expedition of doctors, nurses, and orderlies from the South arrived when the heaviest work was over; still they rendered valuable service.

Small River Settlement, at one time a happy little community of nearly 200 souls, is practically deserted.

Superstitious fear of the habitation in which a death has taken place is the main cause of the desertion. In this camp thirty-two deaths occurred. The houses, many of them tolerably substantial, are now deserted. The occupants who survived the epidemic migrated to the south side of the Cockatoo River, Utingu, and other camps.

General.—Patrols of the islands during the year by the Protectors have been limited. Yam, Yorke, and Cocoanut Islands were visited in March, and food relief was taken to each island to help them get a start after the influenza. During this patrol an exchange of teachers was effected. Mrs. Smallwood, from Thursday Island, took charge of Yorke Island, in place of Mr. Connolly, whose services were terminated. Twelve days were occupied in patrol work, covering a distance of 335 miles. This does not include the patrol work of the medical relief party.

Small River Settlement, Yam, Yorke, Cocoanut, Badu, Adam, and Darnley were the only places visited by the Protector.

RESERVES.

In each report for some years the urgent need for a definite and generous policy for the betterment of the aboriginals as a race has been emphasised.

Taking the figures of this State alone, the fact that nearly 60 per cent. of the natives are unemployed and probably unemployable, and are existing in greater or less destitution and degradation, presents a sociological problem that calls for serious and urgent consideration.

This problem has for long seriously exercised the minds of many of our scientists and noted ethnologists, and the emphatic opinion of these authorities, although their researches have been mostly centred in the primitive type, is that complete segregation and protection are essential if we would save these people from destruction.

Although only a small percentage of our Queensland natives would now come within the class of interest to our scientists, that is, the primitive savage unspoiled by contact with civilisation, the appeal is equally insistent as regards the large majority who have already suffered contamination.

The insidious effects of such contact have clearly demonstrated the fact that these people are quite incapable of holding their own, unaided or unsheltered, in the battle of life, and that any

project having for its object the betterment of them as a race must have, for its first principle, complete segregation.

The reservation of suitable territory and the establishment of more settlements is a matter which should receive immediate consideration, as even under present conditions the steady drift to the sanctuary of the reserve tends to overburden the existing institutions and to seriously hamper social progress.

GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENTS.

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

Taroom (Superintendent, H. C. Colledge).

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

Labour.—The demand for labour has been steady, although the prolonged drought in the West affected it somewhat, and some Northern employers still have to adjust their old ideas as to the value of labour and treatment of natives. Behaviour in employment was generally satisfactory.

The number of natives engaged out was—

Barambah, 317, including 148 for short terms.

Taroom, 41.

Palm Island, 90, including 22 for short terms.

The wages deductions collected amounted to £9,037, being for Barambah £5,288, Taroom £1,169, and Palm Island £2,579. Of this, the following amounts were contributions to settlement maintenance:—Barambah £310, Taroom £87, and Palm Island £184.

The balances to credit of inmates of these stations are—Barambah £4,957, Taroom £3,065, and Palm Island £916. These savings earned interest amounting to £276.

Health.—Health generally has been good. Ophthalmia has been in evidence at both Barambah and Taroom, and also seasonal outbreaks of influenza, with resultant throat and chest troubles. At Barambah a number of cases of beri-beri was treated, and investigations and treatment for hookworm disease were carried out.

The new hospital building at Barambah is completed, and when furnished and fitted with an efficient lighting and sewerage system the medical staff will be in a position to cope effectively with the needs of the large population of over 600.

The number of deaths recorded at each place was—Barambah 37, Taroom 8, Palm Island 18.

Births numbered—Barambah 34, Taroom 16, and Palm Island 17.

Crime.—Serious crime has been non-existent. At Barambah 11 natives, and at Taroom 1, were prosecuted, mostly for absconding or disobedience, and at Palm Island 7 were punished on the settlement for breaches of discipline.

Retail Stores.—The establishment of retail stores on the settlement has proved a great boon to the inmates, enabling them thus to obtain many comforts not otherwise possible to provide. The natives appreciate this benefit, as the amount of money spent by them in purchases, £6,344, will show. It also provides a healthy outlet for earnings which would otherwise go in gambling

or drink, and as a consequence the families, especially the women and children, benefit to a greater degree.

The sales at each settlement were—

Barambah, £3,129, of which £310 was for cash.

Taroom, £1,497 (cash £651).

Palm Island, £1,706 (cash £319).

The sales other than cash were made on orders against the natives' credit in the Savings Bank.

School.—School has regularly been held at Barambah and Taroom, and the Inspectors of the Department of Public Instruction report satisfactory progress. An extension of the building at Barambah has been made, to provide extra room, but a larger and more modern building is badly needed. It has not yet been possible to build the new school and teachers' quarters required at Taroom and Palm Island, so at the latter place a teacher has not yet been provided. The teacher at Taroom has, nevertheless, done good work under difficult conditions.

Instruction, as often as possible, has been given at Palm Island by the nurse.

Industries.—The drought has again affected farming operations, though fairly creditable crops of vegetables were raised for home consumption.

At Barambah, the cultivation and gardens produced 4 tons of oats, 4 tons of lucerne, 80 bushels of maize, 4 tons of pumpkins, 6,800 cabbages, besides carrots, turnips, English potatoes, &c. Two acres of sweet potatoes were planted, and a trial planting made of 2 acres of cotton.

The pigs have thrived, and 8 were sent to market, realising £28.

The sawmill cut 117,500 super feet of timber, besides dressing all the material for new hospital and nurses' quarters.

At Taroom a fine dam has been built near the orchard, and it holds a valuable supply of water, which makes irrigation of the orchard plot possible. About 20 acres have been newly cleared for cultivation, and a crop of about 12 tons of Florence wheat was garnered from 5 acres for stock feed. Good crops of cauliflowers, cabbage, beans, marrows, pumpkins, &c., were raised, and used for food. Forty acres of pear were also cleared by natives on piece-work rates.

At Palm Island an experimental planting of cotton failed, and the plot was replanted with peanuts. Bananas and pineapples have returned good results. A number of the men have started limeburning, for which there is a ready sale at the sugar mills.

Stock.—The stock again felt the effects of the drought, but very few losses were recorded.

The cattle at Barambah now number 575. Seventeen beasts were lost through the drought, and 13 were killed for beef issue. The pigs number 26, and during the year 8 were sold to the bacon factory.

At Taroom the cattle number 200. Nine were killed for beef. The sheep total 576.

Besides yielding 46 for mutton, the wool returned £145. Losses from dogs and pear numbered 31.

Administrative Buildings.—A fine hospital building, with provision for general, maternity, and isolation cases, has been built at Barambah, and an annexe for nurses' quarters, kitchens, laundry, &c. A home, with accommodation for 36 single men, is also nearing completion, and two more cottages have been erected for native families. Additions have been made to the saw-mill buildings, and new timber racks have been built.

Fifty patent flyproof pansteads, of a type approved by the Hookworm Campaign staff, have been made and installed in suitable privies throughout the camp, thus establishing an effective sanitary service. It has not yet been possible to go on with the building of the new girls' quarters and school.

No extra building has been done at either Taroom or Palm Island, but two extra cottages for each of these places have been approved.

Social Improvement.—To the extent only that it has been possible to assist the inmates in obtaining improved living condition, has social progress been made. It is otherwise impossible. At Barambah the few families already provided with decent cottages show gratifying appreciation, and the mill timber has enabled many others to improve the comfort of the huts and shanties built by themselves. Even that little has made a noticeable improvement in health.

The village at Palm Island, with its well-ordered, neat streets and parks, and flourishing plantations, is greatly admired by visitors, but the thatch cottages, though for a while comfortable and picturesque, are not serviceable for longer than a year or two.

The establishment of an aboriginal school at Gayndah has resulted in great improvement of the native camp life there. The teacher, Mr. Williams, has taken a sympathetic interest in the welfare, not only of his pupils in school, but in their home life, and in this task he has received great assistance from Miss Stewart, a missionary of the Aborigines' Inland Mission.

Religious Instruction.—At all these places religious instruction and services have been provided by neighbouring church or mission organisations, with the encouragement and assistance of the staffs. The inmates, especially the children, have enjoyed them, and show their interest and appreciation by regular attendance.

Recreation.—Every encouragement has been given to outdoor amusements by providing the material for cricket, football, tennis, and usual school games to wean them, by counter attraction, from the vice of gambling. Native sports and corroborees have been encouraged with the same object.

The Christmas season was, as usual, celebrated with the usual gifts of toys, clothing, and luxuries, the old, indigent, sick, and young being specially catered for.

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At Taroom the cattle number 200. Nine were killed for beef. The sheep total 576.

Besides yielding 46 for mutton, the wool returned £145. Losses from dogs and pear numbered 31.

Administrative Buildings.—A fine hospital building, with provision for general, maternity, and isolation cases, has been built at Barambah, and an annexe for nurses' quarters, kitchens, laundry, &c. A home, with accommodation for 36 single men, is also nearing completion, and two more cottages have been erected for native families. Additions have been made to the saw-mill buildings, and new timber racks have been built.

Fifty patent flyproof pansteads, of a type approved by the Hookworm Campaign staff, have been made and installed in suitable privies throughout the camp, thus establishing an effective sanitary service. It has not yet been possible to go on with the building of the new girls' quarters and school.

No extra building has been done at either Taroom or Palm Island, but two extra cottages for each of these places have been approved.

Social Improvement.—To the extent only that it has been possible to assist the inmates in obtaining improved living condition, has social progress been made. It is otherwise impossible. At Barambah the few families already provided with decent cottages show gratifying appreciation, and the mill timber has enabled many others to improve the comfort of the huts and shanties built by themselves. Even that little has made a noticeable improvement in health.

The village at Palm Island, with its well-ordered, neat streets and parks, and flourishing plantations, is greatly admired by visitors, but the thatch cottages, though for a while comfortable and picturesque, are not serviceable for longer than a year or two.

The establishment of an aboriginal school at Gayndah has resulted in great improvement of the native camp life there. The teacher, Mr. Williams, has taken a sympathetic interest in the welfare, not only of his pupils in school, but in their home life, and in this task he has received great assistance from Miss Stewart, a missionary of the Aborigines' Inland Mission.

Religious Instruction.—At all these places religious instruction and services have been provided by neighbouring church or mission organisations, with the encouragement and assistance of the staffs. The inmates, especially the children, have enjoyed them, and show their interest and appreciation by regular attendance.

Recreation.—Every encouragement has been given to outdoor amusements by providing the material for cricket, football, tennis, and usual school games to wean them, by counter attraction, from the vice of gambling. Native sports and corroborees have been encouraged with the same object.

The Christmas season was, as usual, celebrated with the usual gifts of toys, clothing, and luxuries, the old, indigent, sick, and young being specially catered for.

severe damage in the cyclone and has, it is learnt, coped with a heavy task in restoring the station. A fine sawmill, costing £3,000, second-hand, has been installed. The engine is 100 horse-power, and the plant comprises breaking-down and bench saws, full planing and moulding machines.

As the jetty was demolished during the cyclone, all this heavy machinery was transported by launch and "snigged" ashore by bullocks. A causeway, containing 5,000 cubic yards of soil, and several bridges, has been built from the site of the mill, through half a mile of swamp, to the timber country. It is intended to lighten the sawn timber in excess of home building requirements to Cairns for sale.

This plant is manned by aboriginals under a skilled white mechanic, and, besides providing remunerative employment for the natives, will be an important source of revenue.

At Mitchell River a new out-station has been started on the Magnificent River, about 12 miles from Trubanaman, where some good scrub soil offers a better chance of successful agricultural operations. The mission has a fine herd of cattle, which is thriving well.

The mission at Purga was transferred during the year to the control of the Salvation Army, and a large hall for use also as a school, a new cottage for Superintendent, and a dining hall for the orphans have been added to the buildings. The old school and the girls' cottage have been improved and turned into dormitories for the girls and boys.

Social.—All the missions are making good progress in the work of socialising the natives under their control. It will be seen from the industrial reports that these institutions have recognised the importance of improvement of living conditions. The establishment of sawmills on most of the missions to assist the people to obtain, from the resources of their own country, the material for hygienic dwellings, provides a great object lesson, the value of which cannot be overestimated, and advances the people a good step towards the first plane in the social scale—self-dependence.

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, 1919	.. ..	5,296	12 3
<i>Collections—</i>			
Estates, deceased	.. ..	1,497	9 11
Unclaimed bank balances	.. ..	459	0 8
Wages—Deserters	.. ..	19	15 6
<i>Purga Mission—</i>			
Subsidies	.. ..	177	12 11
Moneys and earnings	.. ..	73	7 7
<i>Refunds—</i>			
Advance account loans	.. ..	314	17 9
Interest on settlement joint accounts	.. ..	531	13 7
Miscellaneous	.. ..	47	5 8
<i>Transfers—Bank accounts of deported natives</i>			
	.. ..	479	3 8
Sales—Cuttlefish, Cape Bedford	.. ..	13	7 0
Prize Money—Taroom Settlement Exhibit	.. ..	3	2 6
		£3,913	9 0
		<i>Expenditure.</i>	
<i>Expenses—</i>			
<i>Barambah—</i>			
Hospital buildings	.. ..	1,503	1 8
Hospital furniture	.. ..	119	17 6
Village buildings	.. ..	667	10 8
Watchmen's wages	.. ..	14	14 0
Sawmill working	.. ..	1,196	16 1
Water supply	.. ..	2	17 6
Purga Mission upkeep	.. ..	535	1 6
<i>Grants—</i>			
Purga Mission for buildings	.. ..	500	0 0
Various missions	.. ..	37	11 0
Claim—Damage to launch, Hull River	.. ..	40	0 0
Purchase of Land—Palm Island	.. ..	100	0 0
<i>Refunds—</i>			
Proceeds sale of fish, Cape Bedford	.. ..	13	14 4
To relatives—Deceased estates	.. ..	744	10 10
Burial of destitute natives	.. ..	52	5 0
Clothing and rations, destitute natives	.. ..	41	13 2
Loans—Advance account	.. ..	315	0 0
Christmas Goods—Settlement, interest account	.. ..	394	18 0
Miscellaneous	.. ..	9	17 3
Balance, 31st December, 1920	.. ..	2,624	0 6
		£3,913	9 0

The estimated aboriginal population at end of the year was 16,400, and the total expenditure on relief was £41,250. The collections, including wages and earnings of aboriginals, sales of produce of fishing vessels, settlements, &c., amounted to £123,816.

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 1920

Corporate Author: Queensland, Chief Protector of Aboriginals
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