

1869.

VICTORIA.

SIXTH REPORT

OF

THE CENTRAL BOARD

APPOINTED TO WATCH OVER THE INTERESTS

OF

THE ABORIGINES IN THE COLONY
OF VICTORIA.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY'S COMMAND.



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REPORT.

SIR,

The Central Board appointed to watch over the interests of the Aborigines have the honor to Report on the condition of the Aborigines as follows:—

CORANDERRK.

The area originally reserved for the Aborigines at this station was 2,300 acres, but a further reservation was made subsequently, and the total area now set apart is about 4,850 acres.

The number of blacks on the station during the year ending 31st July, 1866, was, on an average, 104; and the average daily attendance was ninety-nine.

The attendance during the following year was 100, and the average daily attendance was ninety-seven.

For the year ending 31st July, 1868, the attendance was seventy-six, and the average daily attendance seventy-four.

During the period from the 1st August, 1865, to the 31st July, 1868, there have been sixteen deaths on this station, and six births, and six marriages.

On the whole the health of the Aborigines has been good.

In May, 1867, a low fever was prevalent, and five of the blacks died of the disease. The other deaths were from inflammation of the lungs, the effects of over indulgence in spirituous liquors, St. Vitus' dance, old age, and consumption.

The quantity of ground cultivated is seventy acres.

There are fifteen acres of wheat, about twenty-eight acres of oats, and potatoes will be sown in a paddock about twenty acres in extent, and there is one acre planted with fruit trees.

The yield from the potato crop last year was about forty tons, and the value of the oats and wheat grown last season was about £100.

The stock at present on the station consists of eighteen bullocks, forty-eight cows, thirty-eight steers, thirty-two heifers, two bulls, twenty-one pigs, one mare, and three fillies, belonging to the Government; and eight mares, four horses, fourteen fillies, and seven colts, belonging to the Aborigines.

The annual value of the production of this station for the year ending 31st July, 1868, was £480, and was made up of the following items:—

Potatoes ...	...	...	...	...	£200
Oats ...	...	...	...	...	60
Wheat ...	...	...	...	...	40
Straw and Hay ...	...	...	...	...	60
Fruit ...	...	...	...	...	20
Rugs and Baskets ...	...	...	...	...	100

During the year ended 31st July, 1866, the Aborigines grubbed thirty acres of land and erected one mile of good three-rail fencing. They built a good slab barn, and erected four huts for dwellings.

During the same period the number of huts regularly inhabited by married couples on the station was fifteen.

Nearly all the huts are kept very tidy by the women, who also employ themselves in making baskets for sale.

During the next year only seven acres of ground were grubbed, owing to the fever breaking out just at the time when such work should have been done. One thousand posts and rails were laid down to enclose a new paddock, but the fever stopped this work also. Five new huts were almost completed. The next year, ending 31st July, the work done on the station was as follows:—A new paddock of ten acres was made, and was nearly all sown with wheat. One new hut was built, and the old ones were repaired and improved, and gardens were made to each hut. Fruit trees were planted in one acre of land. Posts and rails were split for a new paddock of thirty-four acres, and for two new stockyards and a pig paddock.

There are at present at Coranderrk thirty-eight children—twenty males and eighteen females. Twenty-two of the children are blacks, and sixteen are half-castes. Six blacks and one half-caste are under five years old ; seven blacks and four half-castes are above five years and under ten years old ; eight blacks and seven half-castes are above ten years and under fifteen years old ; and one black and four half-castes are above fifteen years and under seventeen years old.

The boys and girls have made fair progress in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Eight of the boys and eight of the girls are very good scholars, and all the others attending the school can now read in the Second Book, and some of them can write pretty well.

Seven of the eldest boys milk the cows and do all the work in the garden, and also some work on the farm.

The girls above seven years of age are taught sewing and all kinds of house-work, and three or four of them are very good servants.

The general condition of this station, the culture which has brought many of the black children and half-castes to a state of education not inferior to that observed amongst Europeans of the same age in Common Schools, the system of regular industry introduced and adopted amongst the adults, and the material results, show that the labors of the Central Board and its officers have been beneficial in a high degree. The results, indeed, have far exceeded the most sanguine expectations of those amongst the members of the Board who have had the largest experience of the Aboriginal character.

It is right to say that, up to the present time, this, the most prosperous Aboriginal station in Victoria, or perhaps in Australia, has been managed exclusively by the Board and its officers, and is not indebted for its success to any extraneous assistance.

LAKE HINDMARSH.

The ground reserved for the Aborigines at this place contains 1,897 acres, and is all fenced in.

Three acres are under cultivation for the purpose of growing hay for the horses, and two acres are laid out in gardens, of which one acre belongs to the blacks and the other to missionaries. The produce of these gardens is consumed on the station.

The stock on the station consists of 1,225 sheep, three horses, six working bullocks, five cows, and seven young cattle.

During the past year 450 sheep and one heifer have been killed and consumed on the station.

The average daily attendance of the Aborigines during the past three years, ending 31st July last, has been as follows :—During the first year, forty-two ; the second, forty-three ; and during the past year, fifty-seven.

During the same period there have been twenty-one deaths reported.

There are five men, four boys, nine women, and one girl, who can read pretty well ; and fourteen men, two boys, five women, and four girls, who are more or less advanced in spelling-books.

Five men, three boys, six women, and one girl, can write fairly, and fourteen men, three boys, eight women, and four girls, are learning to write.

The total number of buildings now on this station is twenty-six. Of these, fifteen are dwelling-houses, and there are besides four bark huts. Eight of the houses are permanently inhabited, and seven are unfinished. There are also a chapel, hospital, store, kitchen, &c.

The number of blacks living in the houses and huts is thirty-seven. The other blacks live in the camp, their houses not being finished, and some have no houses. With one or two exceptions, the houses are kept clean.

One of the houses is built of stone ; the others are substantial log huts floored with boards, and they have doors and glass windows, and are plastered inside with lime.

None of the Aborigines who live on the station indulge in intoxicating drink.

Drink is sometimes brought to the station by strange blacks, but not often.

LAKE TYERS.

The area reserved at Lake Tyers for the Aborigines is 2,000 acres.

The quantity of ground fenced in is about six acres, three of which are under cultivation. The kinds of produce are potatoes, cabbages, carrots, &c., and they are consumed on the station.

There is no stock on the station belonging to the Government.

The number of Aborigines on this station during the last three years has been as follows :—During the year ending 31st July, 1866, the average daily attendance was twenty-one ; during the year ending 31st July, 1867, twenty-two ; and during the year ending 31st July, 1868, twenty-three.

The number of deaths at this station during the last three years is, according to the reports, eleven. There have been two births.

The number of adult males who can read and write is as follows :—One young man can read and write pretty well, and six can read and write a little. One boy can read and write well, and nine, who have settled on the station during the last six months, are making good progress in reading and writing. Four girls can read tolerably well, and one is beginning to read.

There are seven buildings now on the station. One is constantly occupied by one young man and four boys. The other buildings are—the school, the store, missionary's house, and a large bark hut unfinished.

Whenever the blacks get a chance they procure intoxicating drinks. There are some of the blacks, however, who can go to the townships without giving way to temptation.

LAKE WELLINGTON.

The area reserved for the Aborigines at Lake Wellington is 2,356 acres. The quantity of land fenced in is 200 acres, and about four or five acres are cultivated. The produce of this ground was about nine tons of potatoes, which were all used on the station.

There are also several acres of garden land fenced in and worked by those blacks who have settled down on the station permanently.

There are thirty-nine head of cattle belonging to the Government, of which twelve are milch cows. The milk and butter are used on the station.

The number of Aborigines on the station during the three years ending 31st July last was as under :—The average daily attendance was forty-two for the year ending 31st July, 1866 ; fifty-two for the year ending 31st July, 1867 ; and sixty-nine for the year ending 31st July, 1868.

The number of adult males who can read and write a little is five. Six adult females can read and write.

The number of male children who can read and write pretty well is seven. Six female children are as far advanced as the males.

There are also a few more boys who have commenced their lessons.

One of the adult females has a very good education, and is employed by a missionary as a salaried teacher for the school.

The health of the blacks at this station has been very good. The number of deaths that have occurred during the three years ending 31st July last was seventeen, and the number of births four. There have been four marriages on the station during the same period.

There are nineteen buildings now on the station.

The houses are continually inhabited by the Aborigines, and, with a few exceptions, are clean and well kept.

Two houses and a large school-house have been erected during the past year.

During the previous year two houses were built by the blacks, and one hundred and sixty acres of ground were fenced in.

There are still some amongst the Aborigines who indulge in intoxicating drinks ; but on the whole drinking has decreased very much, and it happens now only very seldom with those few.

The police do their best to prevent the Aborigines from getting intoxicating drinks.

LAKE CONDAR.

A station for the Aborigines who were formerly at the reserve at Framlingham, has been formed at Lake Condar.

Upwards of seventy blacks have settled on the reserve, which contains 2,043 acres 1 rood, and they have commenced to clear some of the land. Fourteen acres have been cleared and fenced in.

The stock on the station consists of seven bullocks, one bull, four cows, three steers, one yearling heifer, three calves, and two hundred and twenty sheep.

The buildings on the station are but temporary structures. They consist of four huts, in which a few of the blacks reside. The remainder of the blacks live in mia-mias. There is a store-house and a missionary's slab hut.

The correspondent reports that the greater number of the blacks will drink to intoxication whenever they can get the opportunity. The police invariably exert themselves in a praiseworthy manner to prevent the traffic in intoxicating liquors; but it is not easy to match the cunning of the sordid dealers in poisonous drinks, who, for the sake of the gain of a few pence, will at any moment unscrupulously imperil the life of any poor black who comes in their way; and even when they are caught in the act it is not easy to bring them to punishment.

ECHUCA.

The blacks at Echuca number sixty-eight, consisting of forty-four males and twenty-four females.

The deaths during the year 1868 were six—four males and two females.

The stores supplied by the Central Board are given, as a rule, only to the aged, infirm, and sickly blacks, thereby encouraging, and in a measure compelling, the healthy ones to provide a subsistence for themselves.

During many months the blacks almost entirely maintain themselves by catching fish, hunting native game, &c.; others obtain employment on stations, and a few make good earnings by stripping bark.

Many of the blacks of both sexes still indulge in intoxicating drinks, but they find it difficult to obtain liquors now.

CARR'S PLAINS.

The Aborigines at this place number twenty-nine, consisting of eleven men, nine women, one boy, one girl, and seven children.

They have built themselves three comfortable huts, in which they live. They hunt and fish very little.

Some of the blacks spend most of their earnings in drink.

TOWANINNIE.

The Aborigines in this locality are under the charge of Mr. James Finley.

There are seventeen blacks at this place, and they consist of seven men, seven women, one half-caste boy sixteen years old, and one half-caste girl, and a child three years old.

Mr. Finley reports that the blacks hunt very little now. He says that they have no means of getting drink in the locality of his station.

WALMER, HORSHAM.

The Aborigines in this locality are under the charge of the honorary correspondent, Mr. Charles Wilson, and Mr. Alexander Wilson, of Vectis.

The number of Aborigines in this locality is eighteen—nine men, six women, one half-caste girl, and two Aboriginal children.

Mr. Wilson, in August, 1868, stated that the blacks still indulge in intoxicating drinks, which they purchase themselves or get from others with the moneys they earn by working on the station.

Mr. Wilson remarks that two Aborigines, "Sandy" and "Fanny," and two children, have resided in a hut on his station for about three years, and that they live as respectably as many white people. "Sandy" is generally employed on the station at about 10s. per week. He expends a good part of his money in clothing, &c., for his family.

CARNGHAM.

The Aborigines in this locality are under the charge of Mr. Andrew Porteous, of Prettytower, Stockyard Hill.

They number forty-two, and consist of twenty-four men and eighteen women.

Mr. Porteous reports that the blacks still indulge in intoxicating drinks whenever they can get them.

REIDSDALE, NEAR TARRAWINGEE.

Mr. Curtis A. Reid is the honorary correspondent in this locality, and the number of Aborigines under his care is thirty-three—eleven males, fifteen females, and seven children, the greater number of the latter being half-castes.

In a report dated 9th September, 1868, he writes:—

Four of the children under my care, who have arrived at a sufficient age, attend school daily at Tarrawingee, and the Church of England Sunday School at the same place every Sunday. They are progressing rapidly and show great quickness and aptitude in learning. I have one lad employed on the station to whom I pay wages. He is a very useful servant and does not touch intoxicating drinks, but uses his money to provide himself with clothes and other necessaries.

I also employ two half-caste girls, who are very excellent servants.

The rising generation seem to be accommodating themselves to the habits and customs of civilized life. The original stock of Aborigines is rapidly disappearing, and has decreased fully one-half within the last seven years.

WARRNAMBOOL.

The Aborigines in the vicinity of Warrnambool are under the charge of Mr. Francis Tozer, of Wangoon, and Mr. H. B. Lane, P.M.

They number twenty-six—nineteen men and seven women.

Mr. Tozer reports that on the whole the conduct of the blacks is very good, and that only a few of them indulge in intoxicating liquors.

There is a large reserve at Framlingham, on which the Aborigines were located from September, 1865, to the 15th November, 1867. Subsequently they removed to the reserve at Lake Condah, that locality having been recommended as a more suitable place.

At Framlingham the Aborigines had the services of a master and matron; and stores to the value of £360 were sent to them during the year 1866.

The attempt to form a station at this place was, however, not very successful, though every exertion was used by the Central Board to ensure practical and useful results.

Some of the Aborigines remained in the vicinity of the old station at Framlingham, and refused altogether to live at Lake Condah, and in order to protect them and to provide for their wants, Mr. Francis Tozer, who resided near the place, was appointed an honorary correspondent, and stores and clothing for the blacks were sent to him.

A master and matron have been employed to teach such of the blacks at Framlingham as choose to remain there, and a depôt for stores will be formed.

It is not expected that any very useful results will follow on this arrangement. The object of the Central Board is to prevent destitution and suffering amongst those who persist in remaining at Framlingham, and to afford the means of improvement to such as are willing to attend the school, which will be conducted by the master and matron; but it is to Lake Condah and not Framlingham that we must look for such results as have rewarded the exertions of the Board at Coranderrk.

Mr. Green, the Inspector of Stations, is now at Lake Condah, and it is hoped he will introduce order and good management, and lay the basis of a scheme which will be productive of lasting benefit to the blacks.

ULUPNA, MURRAY RIVER.

Mr. James Rutherford has charge of the Aborigines at this station.

There are about forty grown-up blacks at Ulupna, and about twelve children.

One of the young men, "Freddy," is being educated, and he is able to read and write a little.

The foregoing brief sketch of the condition of the principal Aboriginal stations throughout the colony is sufficient to show that the interests of this people are not neglected; and the Central Board may point with some gratification to the picture presented at the present time when contrasted with that which, prior to the appointment of the Board, was a scandal and a disgrace to the colony.

Formerly, wars *inter se*, secret murders, the complete abandonment of every restraint, and the open indulgence by the Aborigines in intoxicating liquors, and the crimes consequent thereon, were the constant themes of writers for the press. Now,

a war *inter se* is never heard of ; tribes formerly hostile to each other are living amicably on the stations ; their children assemble every morning in the same school-house for instruction ; the adults labor side by side in the same field ; the traffic in intoxicating liquors, if not wholly stopped, has been greatly reduced, and the comfort, progress, and active industry apparent at such stations as Coranderrk, are surely proofs sufficient to convince even the ignorant and the unreflecting that the liberality of Parliament in providing funds for subsidising the stations is not misplaced.

That the Central Board could in nine years effect a complete revolution in the habits and modes of life of the Aborigines (contaminated as they have been by contact with the lowest class of whites—some seeking to rob them of their earnings, others striving for their own selfish ends to get the control of them) was not to be expected ; but enough has been done to prove that the blacks can be made to occupy a position neither mean nor despicable—for they can be taught to labor and to expend their earnings judiciously.

It is but just and right for the Central Board to record their appreciation of the valuable assistance rendered by the several honorary correspondents throughout the colony. Their gratuitous services have been exceedingly beneficial to the Aborigines.

The Central Board have urged again and again that an Act should be passed providing for the management and protection of the Aborigines ; and they now learn with satisfaction that the Honorable J. J. Casey, the Minister of Justice, has prepared a Bill and is about to introduce it to Parliament.

Possessed of such powers as they have sought, it will be easy for the Central Board to train and educate black and half-caste children in such a way as to make them useful members of society. Powerless as the Board are at present, they can only exert themselves with benefit to the blacks up to a certain point. As soon as a young man or a young woman arrives at the age of fifteen or sixteen their plans fail, for the children can, if they are so minded, leave the stations, and attach themselves to publicans and depraved characters, who are ever on the watch to inveigle them from their homes.

As regards the adults, the Board is entirely at the mercy of interested persons who seek to get a profit by buying the clothes supplied by the Board or obtaining the clothes and blankets in exchange for intoxicating liquors.

Protected by a just law, there is hope that this people may yet be preserved from the harsher miseries which in all countries have afflicted aborigines whose lands have been taken by those against whose power they could offer no effectual resistance ; and the very helplessness of the Australian blacks, their patience under wrong, their mildness, and their loyalty when their faith has been relied on—not in Victoria only, but in all parts of Australia—should move our wealthy State to deal with them more than generously—more than kindly.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your Excellency's most obedient
and humble servant,

JAMES MACBAIN,
President.

His Excellency
The Honorable Sir John Henry T. Manners Sutton, K.C.B.,
Governor-General, &c., &c.

Office of the Central Board,
Melbourne, 10th June, 1869.