

1932.
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QUEENSLAND.

REPORT

UPON THE

OPERATIONS OF THE SUB-DEPARTMENTS

OF

Aboriginals, Dunwich Benevolent Asylum, Inebriates Institution (Dunwich), Jubilee Sanatorium for Consumptives (Dalby), Westwood Sanatorium, Home for Epileptics (Willowburn), Prisons, Queensland Industrial Institution for the Blind, Diamantina Hospital for Chronic Diseases (South Brisbane), and Eventide Home (Charters Towers).

PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT BY COMMAND.

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

Home Secretary's Department,
Brisbane, 23rd October, 1931.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE HOME SECRETARY.

SIR,—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 (Manager and Medical Superintendent, Dr. F. Challands).
INEBRIATE INSTITUTION, DUNWICH (Manager and Medical Superintendent, Dr. F. Challands).
JUBILEE SANATORIUM FOR CONSUMPTIVES, DALBY (Visiting Medical Officer, Dr. W. H. N. Randall; Superintendent, Miss M. Nutt).
WESTWOOD SANATORIUM (Visiting Medical Officer, Dr. J. H. Blackburn; Superintendent, Miss M. Scully).
HOME FOR EPILEPTICS, WILLOWBURN; Superintendent, Miss E. M. Thomas.
PRISONS (Comptroller-General, W. J. Gall, C.M.G.).
QUEENSLAND INDUSTRIAL INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND, SOUTH BRISBANE (Acting Manager, T. L. Muller.)
DIAMANTINA HOSPITAL FOR CHRONIC DISEASES, SOUTH BRISBANE (Visiting Medical Officer Dr. A. Jefferis Turner).
EVENTIDE HOME, CHARTERS TOWERS (Manager, W. H. Berry).

Aboriginal Department—Information contained in Report for the Year ended 31st December, 1931.

POPULATION.

The aboriginal census on 30th June, 1931, shows a further decrease of 388 in the number of full bloods, while the half-castes have increased by 163.

As the vital statistics show that the number of births recorded was 381 and of deaths 355, an increase of 26, it is evident that some have been missed in the enumeration, doubtless because of the nomadic habits of the people, particularly in the border districts.

Total aboriginal population—17,706. Males, 9,882; females, 7,824.

FULL-BLOOD, 13,654.

—	Male.	Female.
Nomadic	1,632	1,374
Regular employment	2,253	660
Supervised camps	3,114	3,053
Not stated	787	781
Totals	7,786	5,868
Persons	13,654	

HALF-CASTES, 4,052.

—	Male.	Female.
Nomadic	70	56
Regular employment	553	315
Supervised camps	819	827
Not stated	654	758
Totals	2,096	1,956
Persons	4,052	

LABOUR CONDITIONS ON THE LAND.

Severe drought conditions and the failing market for cattle to some extent affected the demand for labour, but in pastoral districts employment was found for practically all the trained men. In the Gulf border districts the embargo on movement of stock, because of the buffalo fly pest, caused some unemployment.

The timely reduction of wages of aboriginal station hands assisted in keeping the demand firm, for the trained local stockman is indispensable on the large grazing areas, where the untrained white labour offering was often useless.

Reports generally were very satisfactory as regards the conduct of the natives employed, although preference was shown for the full-blood in many places, as he is considered to be steadier and more easily controlled. Few complaints have been received of failure on the part of employers to observe the employment regulations.

LABOUR CONDITIONS ON BOATS.

There was a noticeable reduction in the number of engagements of natives as fishing crews in the fleets. At Cooktown, only 15 were so employed on the trochus and beche-de-mer vessels, the wages earned amounting to £247.

The demand for this class of labour from the Palm Island Settlement was also low, only 3 men being engaged; their earnings totalling £37.

Similarly the engagements at the shipping office, Thursday Island, were 296 (Mainlanders 184, Islanders 112), less than half the number so employed in the previous year.

OFFENCES BY ABORIGINALS.

Offences.	1929.	1930.	1931
Drunkenness	46	62	26
Stealing	33	23	9
Creating disturbance	3	4	3
Obscene language	6	5	..
Assault	3	5	3
Resisting arrest .. .. .	..	..	1
Entering	3	..	..
Absconding .. .. .	..	3	2
Found in gaming house .. .. .	..	2	..
Offensive behaviour .. .. .	..	2	..
Murder .. .. .	..	3	..
Destruction of property .. .. .	..	1	..

REMOVALS.

The following return shows the number of natives who, for their own benefit or other reasons, were removed to reserves on Minister's orders:—

Place.	Men.	Women.	Children.	Total.
<i>Settlements—</i>				
Palm Island ..	71	43	31	145
Cherbourg ..	11	4	4	19
Woorabinda ..	2	1	6	9
<i>Missions—</i>				
Yarrabah ..	1	..	..	1
Weipa ..	..	1	..	1
Mona Mona ..	1	3	..	4
Mornington Island	1	2	7	10
Cape Bedford ..	..	..	..	..
Totals ..	87	54	48	189

HEALTH.

Reports from practically all inland districts show a gratifying absence of any serious sickness amongst the natives; but, around the coast, epidemics of influenza, of varying severity, occurred. At Malanda, Gordonvale, and Chillagoe, the outbreaks were of a mild type; but at Yarrabah, Mapoon, and Mornington Island the more severe form of gastric influenza made its appearance. It also appeared on Badu Island in a mild form, but in a more virulent form at Darnley Island.

At Mornington Island the services of the A.I.M. Aerial Doctor had to be urgently requisitioned, and it is pleasing to relate that, although practically all the natives fell victims, as a result of the care and attention given by the Missionaries not one death occurred.

Similarly, at Darnley Island, the prompt measures adopted by the teacher and the loyal help given by the other natives successfully dealt with the serious outbreak at that place.

Mornington Island was unfortunate, in that after the above epidemic was eradicated other epidemics of cattle blight and chicken pox broke out. Although no deaths resulted, several old natives lost the sight of an eye each from the blight.

There were a number of cases of malaria at Aurukun, Weipa, Moa Island, and Yarrabah, and some mild coastal fever at the last place and Port Douglas.

Venereal disease seems most prevalent in the Peninsula. Several cases were treated at the

Gulf Missions, 2 at Coen, 9 at Thursday Island Hospital, 19 in the Cooktown Compound, and 6 at Mungana. Odd cases were also treated at Cloncurry and Longreach.

The Fantome Island Lock Hospital admitted 35 men, 21 women, and 14 children for treatment, and 9 men, 6 women, and 8 children were discharged as cured.

Two cases of suspected leprosy were submitted to test and found positive.

Hookworm treatment was given at Mapoon and Monamona Missions.

By arrangement with the Hookworm Control Campaign Committee the services of their expert Medical Staff were availed of while on campaign work to carry out a survey of aboriginal groups for leprosy and venereal diseases. The settlements at Cherbourg, Woorabinda, and Palm Island, and the Mission at Yarrabah, have so far been surveyed and reports furnished, resulting in a number of venereal cases being sent to hospital for treatment. Several leprosy contact cases were submitted for test.

The number of natives receiving hospital treatment at the Settlements and Missions was as follows:—

Palm Island ..	426
Woorabinda ..	382
Cherbourg ..	244 (Outpatients 4,697)
Aurukun ..	20
Weipa ..	103 (Malaria)
Purga ..	12
Moa Island ..	9
Mitchell River ..	3,500 (Outpatients)
Lockhart River ..	821 (Outpatients)
Yarrabah ..	119 and 20 daily outpatients
Mapoon ..	12 daily, outpatients

In Torres Strait Hospital 226 patients received treatment.

The following country district hospitals also treated sick natives:—

Springsure ..	53	Hughenden ..	10
Maryborough ..	35	Mitchell ..	12
Cooktown ..	19	Goondiwindi ..	6
Townsville ..	10	Bowen ..	15
Herberton ..	20	Cairns ..	156
Rockhampton ..	6	Charleville ..	4
Mackay ..	14	Cloncurry ..	18
Normanton ..	97	Cunnamulla ..	22
Burketown ..	70		

The total number of deaths reported was 355, of which 128 occurred on the Settlements, 70 in Torres Strait, and 157 from Missions and districts.

Births totalled 381, of which Torres Strait claims 156, the Settlements 80, and Missions and other districts 145.

FANTOME ISLAND LOCK HOSPITAL.

Medical Superintendent, Dr. Thos. L. Bancroft. Charge Attendant, F. H. Julian.

ADMISSIONS AND DISCHARGES.

	In Hospital 1-1-31.	Admitted.	Discharged Cured.	Born in Hospital.	Deaths.	Remaining in Hospital, 31-12-31.	Total under Treatment for the Year.
Men ..	15	35	9	..	2	35	50
Women ..	17	21	6	..	5	27	38
Children ..	4	14	8	2	1	11	20
Totals ..	36	70	23	2	8	73	108

Twenty operations were performed during the year. Many of the cases admitted had been suffering from their various conditions for considerable periods prior to admission. Nevertheless, with the exception of a few chronics, all cases remaining in hospital show improvement.

With the exception of the baby born in hospital and weighing only 2 lb. at birth, all deaths occurred to patients suffering from severe venereal conditions, complicated in several instances by wasting disease.

The patients received regular cooked meals, to which much of the improvement in their condition can be attributed.

The rapid influx of patients caused congestion in the ward, which has been relieved to some extent by enclosing the ward verandas on the weather side. In addition, two small temporary wards have been erected. Further extensions and alterations have been approved, and a commencement is being made in the New Year. Additions to equipment on the domestic side are also under consideration.

The year has been an unusually dry one. The Reservoir was effectively repaired early in the year, but owing to faults in the catchment it did not fill as successfully as expected except on heavy downfalls. An additional auxiliary supply is under consideration.

At the beginning of the year the patients were largely old chronic folk. To-day the majority are young people. The problem of controlling and keeping contented an increasing number of young people, over long periods, in a more or less confined area, is not an easy one. Suitable recreation is encouraged. A sports ground is in the making.

Generally the conduct of the patients has been good. The Native Staff are not particularly reliable, but have done as well as could reasonably be expected.

Communication between Palm Island and Fantome Island is of increasing importance. The small motor dinghy has proved very useful, but a larger and faster vessel is necessary.

Although working under difficulties, a good "tone" has been established and maintained. Apart from other reasons, the issues of a sufficiency of clothing have helped tremendously in this direction. The inmates have appreciated the comforts and means for amusement supplied.

YOUNG WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

Regular inspections have been made of the conditions of employment of girls in the suburban areas, and it has been found that the employers generally are abiding by the terms of the Regulations governing employment.

Children in the various homes were similarly visited and their conditions found to be satisfactory. Several of them were obliged to attend the Hospital for Sick Children for various ailments, but on the average the health was good.

It has not been possible to make regular inspections in situations removed from the city and suburbs. However, Police officers who are in constant touch with the conditions of employment in their districts have regularly reported any breaches or other matters needing rectification.

The number of females engaged in employment was 84, of whom 27 were employed in the city and 57 in the country.

Approximately £2,400 was earned as wages during the twelve months, £1,792 of which was collected and banked to the owners' credits. The remainder was received direct as pocket money.

Withdrawals amounting to £2,083 were made from the Savings Bank accounts, principally for the purchase of clothing and holiday expenses.

The balance standing to credit was £6,369, averaging £75 per person.

The ordering and selection of clothing required by these wards involved the Female Protection Branch of the Department in a considerable amount of work.

The selection of suitable situations for the employees and the many and varied domestic difficulties requiring tactful handling are phases of protection that receive much time and thought.

As in previous years little difficulty has been experienced in placing in employment capable and well-trained female servants. There is, however, always a difficulty in securing positions for the girls with children. Particularly is this so in the country districts, where the depression has reduced considerably the call for all domestic labour.

It became necessary to effect the removal of 48 women and 41 children to Settlements and 6 women and 7 children to Missions. This action was taken to enable them to be properly looked after and receive schooling, which conditions were absent in their camp life.

Thirty-five claims for maternity allowance by half-caste mothers were granted by the Maternity Allowance Office. In practically all cases the money was paid through the Department's officers, who controlled it for the benefit of the mother and child.

Permission was granted for the legal marriage of 70 aboriginal half-caste women, in all but one case to men of their own race. One half-caste girl was married to a European.

The number of orphan wards of this Department maintained in Homes was 68, as shown hereunder, the cost of their maintenance being £1,085:—

Sacred Heart Mission, Thursday Island ..	23
Yeronga and Chelmer (girls)	11
Indooroopilly (boys)	4
Purga (girls and boys)	26
Blind and Deaf School	4

HALF-CASTES.

Although the census returns show an increase of 163 in the half-caste population, little reliance can be placed on these figures for statistical purposes, owing to the possible erroneous enumeration of those with a preponderance of white or black blood amongst the true half-breeds.

It is gratifying to note that, notwithstanding the depression in the pastoral industry, in which these people are principally employed, the returns for employment are very little below those of the preceding year.

There was some complaint that the half-caste was not looked upon by employers as being as stable as the full-blood, his mixed blood making him more restless and difficult to control.

It is noteworthy, however, that in very few instances has any desire been shown to marry outside of their own race; in fact, on the institutions, they seem to show a preference for the full-blood.

To this marriage amongst themselves may be attributed a large share of the increase in cross-breed births during the year.

Applications were made by 45 such natives for exemption from the Aboriginal Protection Acts, but after careful investigation of the claims as regards conditions, character, intelligence, and breed, certificates were only granted in 27 cases (16 males and 11 females).

OFFICIAL INSPECTIONS—RESERVES AND INSTITUTIONS.

During the month of June a tour of inspection of the native settlements on the islands of Torres Strait, Cape York Peninsula, and the East Coast was made by the Hon. the Minister, accompanied by the Under Secretary, Home Department, J. C. Kenny, Esq., M.L.A. for Cook district, and the Chief Protector of Aborigines.

The stations visited were: Thursday Island, the island villages of Badu, Poid, Mabuiag, Saibai, Yorke, Darnley, Murray, Cocconut, Cowal Creek Settlement, the Missions at St. Paul's, Moa, Hammond Island, Mapoon, Monamona, and Yarrabah, the Government Settlement at Palm Island, and Fantome Island Lock Hospital.

At all places the Minister received a typical hearty native welcome, the villagers displaying their keen appreciation of this evidence of the Department's interest in their welfare.

A number of important matters affecting administration were inquired into and dealt with.

Later, in October and November, an inspection was made by the Chief Protector of the Mission Stations at Mornington Island, Mitchell River, Aurukun, Weipa, and Mapoon, in the Gulf of Carpentaria, and at Lockhart River, Cape Bedford, McIvor River, and Yarrabah, on the East Coast. It had not been possible to visit most of the above for many years.

The Settlements at Cherbourg (previously Barambah), Woorabinda, Palm Island, Purga, and the Lock Hospital at Fantome Island were also visited and inspected periodically by the Chief Protector and matters of administration discussed and dealt with.

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS AND CAPE YORK PENINSULA.

Protector of Aborigines, C. B. Buxton.

Health.—The general health of the inmates of all reserves has been good. At Badu Island there was an epidemic of influenza in a mild form, and a serious outbreak of the same disease occurred at Darnley.

Fortunately, the Government Medical Officer, Thursday Island, was on a visit to Darnley when the outbreak occurred. At first it appeared to be serious, but the Doctor, assisted by the Superintendent, immediately took steps to check the spread of disease and relieve the sufferers. The school was temporarily converted into a hospital, and a boat despatched to Thursday Island for extra medicines. As a result of these energetic measures, and the willing assistance of natives, not a single case terminated fatally.

There was a gratifying absence of the usual expected outbreaks of malaria at the Poid and Saibai villages. At Poid village, where in the past this distressing fever has appeared in a severe form, comparatively good health was enjoyed by the inhabitants. Only two deaths were reported, and malaria was not responsible for either. Only two cases occurred in which this disease appeared in a severe form. This can be attributed to the careful attention paid by the Superintendent to village sanitation. This, with prophylactic treatment, has no doubt been responsible for the great improvement in the general health.

It is desired to again express appreciation of the services of Dr. Vernon, Government Medical Officer, and Dr. Bevington, Quarantine Officer, in the interests of the natives. The former, who is also Medical Superintendent at the hospital, is always ready, not only to receive patients into the hospital for treatment, but assist, with his advice, the officers of the Department and the Superintendents of the Stations in the matter of first aid.

Torres Strait natives have much cause to be grateful to Dr. Vernon and also to Dr. Bevington, Quarantine Officer, who has always readily given his assistance. The local Hospital Staff, by their kindly care, have also earned the appreciation of the native community.

Population.—The population of the various islands and mainland villages, as disclosed by the census taken as at 30th June, 1931, is as under:—

Badu	428	Murray	466
Poid	216	Yam	164
Mabuiag	279	Yorke	131
Saibai	398	Cocconut	110
Boigu	134	St. Paul's	29
Dauan	102	Cowal Creek	238
Darnley	343	Three Sisters	26
Rennel and Dalrymple	28	Naghir	23
		Stephen	55

The total births for the year ending December were 156 (full-bloods 145, half-castes 11). The deaths for the same period were 70 (full-bloods 60, half-castes 10). The births actually exceeded the deaths by 47, so that the estimated population of the above at the end of the year was 3,217.

Island Hospitals.—First-aid hospitals are now erected on Darnley and Saibai, and the completion of one at Murray Island is expected shortly. The supplies of medicines have been kept up, and satisfactory work in dispensing same has been performed by the Superintendents.

Island Schools.—Very satisfactory progress is apparent in the work of the island schools. Except at Darnley, there was no serious hampering of school work by epidemics. Commendable work was performed by the Government teachers both in school and in village administration. Considering all the difficulties with which the teachers of these schools are confronted, the general condition of the schools controlled by the European officers is satisfactory, even if results are below the standard expected in a European school. It is expected that regular inspection and instruction by the trained officer now visiting will assist towards obtaining the maximum efficiency possible.

Island Improvements.—On account of the depression, the need for conserving Island funds was realised, and it was decided to defer, or rather not to encourage, the carrying out of any extensive Island improvements which would be responsible for large calls upon these funds. Activities therefore in connection with the erection of new public buildings were limited. However, the hospital at Saibai and the school at Yam were proceeded with, and all necessary repairs provided for in connection with all Island buildings.

At Murray Island, the teacher's residence was erected. The work reflects great credit upon three native labourers who were entrusted with the building and painting under the guidance of the Superintendent, Mr. Agnew. At this island the Court House was completed and formally opened in August.

The first man to be tried in the new Court House was the Chief Councillor of the Island, who, as a consequence, was removed from office. An office for the Superintendent has been erected, and repairs effected to several of the existing buildings. An 8-ft. track has been made over Gillam Hill for a distance of 25 chains.

At Mabuiag, Darnley, Yorke, Poid, and Badu, good work has been done in the formation and maintenance of village streets. At Yorke Island this work is being carried out on a rather ambitious scale, without cost against Island funds. The streets are being bordered with concrete made from burned coral. Much heavy work in connection with roads, drains, and bridges has been effected at Darnley, and the general appearance of this village now reflects great credit upon the Superintendent and the villagers. In all islands the villages are kept in clean condition, and the villagers are being encouraged to take more interest in and place more reliance upon their gardens.

Company Boats.—The value of marine produce won by the Company boats was £18,284 2s. 9d., and there is yet the proceeds of the sale of 2 tons of mother-of-pearl shell shipped to London in December to be added to this amount.

In addition to this produce, trochus shell to the value of £273 16s. 3d. was sold on behalf of Palm Island natives, and also part of the 1930 catch of the Island boats to the value of £2,076 7s. 3d. The catches of produce won for 1931 were—Trochus shell 235 tons 0 cwt. 1 qr., pearl-shell 24 tons 14 cwt. 3 qr. 7 lb., and beche-de-mer 18 tons 19 cwt. 0 qr. 9 lb.

Favourable weather for fishing was experienced throughout the year. At the close of 1930 the local trochus market had fallen to rates from £48 to £54 per ton, according to quality, and the market remained so until March, when a further decline to £41 to £49 per ton was experienced. From April sales trochus rose steadily from £51 1s. 6d. until in May the maximum price of £83 1s. 11d. was received.

Prices then declined until the middle of June, when the market firmed at £60 to £64 per ton, and remained so until the end of October. During November and December the ruling prices were from £48 to £56 per ton. The general average price throughout the year was, approximately, £60 per ton.

The first sales of pearl-shell on the 9th April realised £95 6s. per ton. The market then steadily increased; May sales realised £108 10s., June £114 0s. 6d., and from this until November the market was firm at £118 to £122.

In November and December small parcels realised £150 per ton and £152 10s., and later a parcel of 6½ tons £142 11s. 8d. The average price for pearl-shell throughout the year was £117 2s. 6d.

The beche-de-mer market was fair until July, but the quantities landed by company boats were negligible during that portion of the year. Some of the boats, usually engaged in trochus, centred on beche-de-mer during the latter months of the year owing to the increased price offered. In December, all varieties of beche-de-mer were at their highest prices for many years, and the company boats were fortunate in landing practically all their fish during this inflation, for during the last week in December prices fell considerably.

During the year the company boats fleet was increased by the purchase of the lugger Arline for the Darnley Island natives, but two old cutters—the Ugar, of Stephens Island, and the Budia, of Saibai Island—were scrapped as being beyond economical repair for deep sea work.

No difficulty was experienced in having the boats slipped for repairs. The Argan, Saruai, Poruma, Karabai, and Jimmy had expensive repairs and overhauls. Ten other boats were slipped for minor repairs, costing under £30, with the exception of the Don. The cost of this boat's overhaul was £60. £1,235 was paid for repairs during the year.

During the visit of the Hon. the Home Secretary prizes of a cup and flag, respectively, for the lugger and cutter returning the greatest amount of shell per crew were donated, and the successful vessels were the lugger Wakaid, which averaged 1 ton 10 cwt. 2 qr. 13 lb. per man, and the cutter Badu, which averaged 1 ton 2 cwt. 0 qr. 5 lb. per man.

As from the 1st July, company boats contributed towards the Torres Strait Hospital by a payment of seamen's contributions, and for the half-year the hospital benefited to the extent of £53 6s.

Every endeavour was made to stimulate the captains and crews to better efforts. Badu boats maintained their efficiency. Considerable improvement was also manifested by the Mabuiag crews and those of several smaller islands, but the general working of the Poid, Darnley, and Murray boats cannot be regarded as satisfactory. The boat Manu, at Poid, produced encouraging results, but the Karabai was the outstanding bad boat of the Western Islands.

The Murray Island boats are the dismal failures amongst those of the Eastern Islands. It has been found difficult to persuade these people to leave their home reefs, and they seize upon any pretext for returning from the working grounds and remaining at home. For the New Year the Murray Island boats have been placed in charge of Jacob Gabey, erstwhile teacher at Yam, who has instructions to work down the coast. Good results are hoped for.

Aboriginal Industries.—Aboriginal Industries general store at Badu Island is still being conducted efficiently, although it is not expected that the result of the year's trading will be so good as that of the previous year. The business of the shell store is being conducted with great advantage to aboriginal industries. The board controlling this station met as frequently as practicable throughout the year, and thanks are due to the members and the secretary for the very able assistance rendered to me in my capacity as chairman.

Island Funds.—The contributions to the various Island Funds amounted to £1,547, and the disbursements to £1,628, the balance to credit now being £4,484.

Relief to the sum of £52 9s. was granted from the East Coast Fund, and £6 1s. from the Kendal River Fund.

The Small River (Cowal Creek) people contributed £51 8s. 5d., but withdrew for relief needs £90 6s.

The following amounts were also expended in relief on the various islands:—

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Badu ..	333	4	0	Murray ..	195	0	7
Boidu ..	73	3	10	Nagheer ..	7	15	0
Cocanut ..	73	15	2	Saibai ..	170	1	7
Darnley ..	189	15	10	Stephen ..	17	16	5
Dauan ..	61	9	4	Yam ..	62	11	5
Mabuiag ..	93	9	11	Yorke ..	68	1	7
Moa ..	133	17	10				

Recreation.—The Boy Scout and Girl Guide movements still flourish, and their value in development of character and training of the young is fully appreciated.

Many European sports—such as football, cricket, and basket ball—are played, and on Darnley Island a smart uniformed fife and drum band has been formed in connection with the Sea Scouts and Rovers. The old native sports of swimming, boating, fish spearing, dugong hunting, &c., are always popular, but no function is complete without the picturesque native song-dances. Every encouragement is given to them to retain their native folklore and music and avoid the dangers of Europeanisation, which would spell the ruin of an interesting and virile race.

GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENTS.

Cherbourg (previously Barambah), Superintendent, W. Porteous Semple.

Woorabinda, Superintendent H. C. Colledge.

Palm Island, Superintendent E. A. Cornell.

Staff.—Early in February, Mr. E. A. Cornell, Land Ranger at Gaydah, who was seconded to this Department as Acting Superintendent of Palm Island Settlement, took charge of that institution.

Miss Marsey Collins was appointed Matron, with charge of the Hospital and direction of the Child Welfare Section of the female work, Mrs. Cornell being appointed Assistant Matron.

In September, Mr. Delaney, an experienced agriculturist, was appointed Farm Foreman. A junior clerk was also appointed to assist the Superintendent in the office.

Labour.—The demand for labour again suffered from the depression in the pastoral industry, but there was a slight increase in the number of permanent engagements. Female domestics were in fairly good request.

The number of engagements recorded was:—

—	Under Agreement.	Under Casual Employment.
Cherbourg ..	109 (M. 28, F. 81)	73
Palm Island ..	111 (M. 69, F. 42)	..
Woorabinda ..	58 (M. 25, F. 33)	34

In addition, 3 men were engaged from Palm Island for pearl-shell, beche-de-mer, and trochus shell vessels, but, owing to slackness in that industry, there was a heavy decrease after the figures of previous years.

There was a decrease of 50 per cent. in the amount of earnings deposited—£9,038, as compared with 1930, £19,103—owing to the reduction of wages rates to meet the changed labour conditions and the decrease in casual or short term engagements.

The withdrawals, as a consequence, fell from £19,133 in 1930 to £13,953.

Settlement Revenue.

Collections.	Cherbourg.	Palm Island.	Woorabinda.
	£	£	£
Wages, fares, produce, &c.	3,967 15 4	4,075 0 8	3,180 1 8
Interest on bank accounts	200 14 7	414 13 1	139 10 6
Native contributions ..	235 8 6	235 10 5	112 9 11
	£4,403 18 5	£4,725 4 2	£3,432 2 1

Population.

Settlement.	Total.	Full-blood.	Half-castes
Cherbourg ..	801	301	500
Palm Island ..	1,095	768	327
Woorabinda ..	419	231	188
	2,315	1,300	1,015

Conduct.—There has been practically no serious crime or misconduct on the settlements. One man at Fantome Island was imprisoned for inflicting serious bodily harm on a woman, as the outcome of a domestic squabble.

Some trouble has been experienced through a number of discontented young men absconding, necessitating their arrest and prosecution. One main reason was the lack of money for luxuries, owing to unemployment; and, in a few cases, it was to escape the wrath of outraged husbands or because of tribal quarrels.

In view of the fact that, like other members of the community, these people are feeling the financial pinch in many ways, the cheerfulness and orderly behaviour of the inmates generally is very gratifying.

Of one Settlement girl, sent to domestic service in the country, the employer wrote that “her work and good behaviour might well be taken as a pattern by many white girls in similar employment.”

Retail Stores.—The actual native business of these stores suffered a decline of £2,360, as a consequence of the reduced earnings of the employable inmates.

This is a highly important section of the relief operations, for it does much to minimise what hardship may be felt, owing to the loss of employment and unavoidable economies, by enabling those with funds to conveniently obtain for themselves and friends the desired extras and luxuries to supplement the relief issues.

Benevolent supervision of their expenditure can at the same time be exercised.

Settlement.	Cash Sales.			Bank Orders.			Free Issues.			Total.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Cherbourg..	352	11	10	3,336	13	0	1,032	11	0	4,721	15	10
Palm Island	782	8	1	4,694	5	8	650	5	8	6,126	19	5
Woorabinda	1,128	6	7	2,054	18	10	323	0	10	3,506	6	3
										£14,355	1	6

Schools.—Steady progress has been made. Attendance has been regular, no sickness or staff troubles have caused interruption of the work, and the scholars have shown interest in their lessons.

Special attention has been paid to proper nourishment, suitable clothing, and personal cleanliness of the pupils, and it has been found that the result is a decided improvement in mentality.

The attendances, as per school rolls, were as follows:—Cherbourg, 88 boys, 85 girls; total 173. Palm Island, 88 boys, 97 girls, total 185. Woorabinda, 36 boys, 42 girls, total 78.

The new school building at Woorabinda has greatly improved the conditions, and the appointment of a useful native monitor has given the head teacher some much needed assistance.

The commodious new school, on modern plan, has been completed at Palm Island, and the matter of additional teaching assistance is under consideration.

Agriculture.—At Cherbourg the fodder crops were disappointing. Owing to poor quality seed the oats gave a poor return. About 15 tons of lucerne were cut and used. The maize gave a better return, about 250 bushels being harvested.

The following vegetables were grown for home consumption:—Cabbages 14,470, potatoes 4 tons, tomatoes 8 tons, pumpkins, marrows, and squashes 4 tons, cauliflowers 941, mixed vegetables 6½ tons.

At Woorabinda the weather was not favourable for farming. No fodder crops could be grown for winter owing to the long dry spell. A three-acre plot of maize only yielded 10 bags.

There was a plentiful supply of vegetables, owing to irrigation, such as tomatoes, french beans, cowpeas, sweet potatoes, onions, and cabbage. There were also 3 tons of pumpkins and an unusually good crop of water melons, rock melons, squashes, and marrows.

Tests with 10 acres of cotton proved disappointing, the land being too porous. Tobacco was also given a trial, but the seed failed to germinate. Over 15 acres of new ground have been broken up ready for planting.

At Palm Island, the dry spells spoiled farming operations. Several plantings of sweet potatoes were lost from this cause. Pumpkins did well and also peanuts, 23 bags being gathered. Mauritius beans realised £191 18s. 2d.

About 1,000 banana suckers were planted in new scrub land. Several new grasses—viz., paspalum, Rhodes grass, panicum muticum, and kia-kura were planted to improve the pastures.

There were fairly good supplies of vegetables of all sorts, including 53 sacks of cassava. Lemons grow plentifully, and are found very useful in the hospitals. There was also a plentiful mango crop.

Industrial.—The sawmills at Cherbourg and Palm Island have supplied all the timber for improvement work, although some interruption was caused through poorness of the bullock teams in the prolonged dry spell.

The Cherbourg Mill cut 55,926 super. feet, from which two buildings for Woorabinda, an isolation ward and an office, were cut out and sent to that place. To spell the teams the mill worked half-time, while the sawyer erected a large bridge and did necessary road repair work.

New fences were erected for bullock and fattening paddocks, and 1,700 acres were ring-barked. The value of produce sold was £95 7s. 9d.

At Palm Island the sawmill cut 95,966 super. feet of timber, which have all been used in development work. Although a decrease on the previous year's cut, it is very creditable, considering that log supplies are becoming more difficult to obtain, as they have to be man-hauled from the steep and rocky mountain scrubs.

Three miles of fencing have been erected to enclose fresh cultivation and stock paddocks.

Young natives under the carpenter's training have made necessary articles of furniture, such as chairs, tables, hospital lockers, kitchen safes, sanitary pans, and garbage tins. Dray repairs, plumbing, and general repair jobs were also performed.

Several teams worked at trochus shell diving and earned, in this way, £243 15s. 8d. Others, especially women, engage in fishing for food purposes.

At Woorabinda, a metallic circuit telephone line, on poles, was erected between Duaringa and the Settlement, 36 miles. A large dam was sunk at the top end of the reserve.

Six and a-half miles of fencing were erected, to close off the main stock route and to protect the cattle. Two miles of boundary fencing were renewed and a horse paddock for natives enclosed.

The portable steam engine and bench cut all the crossarms for the telephone line, and a useful quantity of scantling for the new shed for the truck and other out-buildings.

Stock.—The season was a good one for stock. At Cherbourg, unfortunately, owing to an inoculation for pleuro, only 272 calves were branded, as compared with 350 in 1930, and the fattening bullocks fell away. One hundred young heifers were added to the breeders, which now total 567. Five Hereford bulls were exchanged for others from Woorabinda. Of our own beasts, 159 were killed through the butcher's shop. The dairy stock were kept in good condition, averaging 20 gallons of milk per day.

At Palm Island the cattle number 188, comprising:—Breeders 60, bulls 2, working bullocks 33, heifers 26, steers 40, calves 27. Horses number 11.

At Woorabinda, in spite of the severe drought, the stock weathered it without serious loss and it was possible to take over 1,000 head of cattle on agistment for six months. There is now a good Hereford herd of 1,400 head, and the quality has been kept up by the regular introduction of good young bulls. A good number of young stock is coming forward. The number killed for beef was 141, comprising 94 fat cows bought, 19 transferred from Cherbourg, and 39 Settlement beasts.

There is a good supply of saddle and draught horses and six mares have been put to a good draught stallion.

Building and Village Improvement.—At Cherbourg, a substantial building, with male and female wards, washhouse and showers, was erected for an Isolation Hospital.

A new bridge, 90 ft. long and 13 ft. high, was built across Muddy Flat Creek. A new road has been made and graded into the main village street.

Three additional native cottages have been built. A number of ornamental trees were planted and are growing well.

At Palm Island, a new school for 200 pupils was completed with necessary outbuildings. The hospital nurses' quarters were altered and enlarged. A workshop for carpenters was erected, several native cottages were built, and numerous additions, repairs, etc. made to other buildings.

The wards and verandas at Fantome Island were enclosed with casements, thus doubling the sleeping accommodation.

At Woorabinda, the commodious new school has proved a boon. A large shed with work benches, etc., has been erected for shelter of the Albion truck, also dray and machinery sheds and a number of sanitary conveniences in the camp.

Religious Instruction.—The representatives of various religious denominations have been given facilities for conducting services and classes of instruction, and these claim that their adherents display keen interest and appear to appreciate their ministrations.

At Palm Island and Woorabinda, clergy of the Church of England and Roman Catholic Churches visit regularly, and at Cherbourg the Church of England minister occasionally.

At all three places the missionaries of the Aborigines Inland Mission visit regularly for Camp services and ministration.

Recreations.—Every encouragement has been given for healthy sport and pleasure. Football and cricket teams have visited neighbouring centres, meeting white opponents, and invariably have given good account of themselves; also, what is more pleasing still, the men have won praise for their exemplary conduct and good sportsmanship.

Each Settlement has its tennis courts, and both children and adults keenly enjoy this game.

The native brass bands at each place provide much enjoyment, which is evidently appreciated, as the large attendances at their concerts, especially for dancing, would indicate.

The Woorabinda Settlement gave a benefit Sports Day, for the Baralaba Ambulance, which returned a substantial cheque.

The native corroborees and hunting and fishing excursions are always popular, and keen competition is shown in displays of skill with native weapons.

The usual Christmas festivities were carried out, many of those with funds generously providing the seasonal luxuries in the enjoyment of which their less fortunate kinsmen participated.

Notwithstanding the prevailing depression outside, the inmates of the Settlement spent a happy time.

MISSIONS.

Yarrabah, Cairns (Superintendent, W. McCullough), Anglican.

Monamona, Cairns (Superintendent, J. L. Branford), Seventh Day Adventists.

Cape Bedford, Cooktown (Superintendent, Rev. G. H. Schwarz), Lutheran.

Lockhart River, Cape York Peninsula (Superintendent, H. Rowan), Anglican.

Moa Island, St. Paul's, Torres Strait (Superintendent, Rev. J. W. Schomberg), Anglican.

Mapoon, Gulf of Carpentaria (Superintendent, Rev. P. R. Currell), Presbyterian.

Weipa, Gulf of Carpentaria (Superintendent, Rev. S. E. McKay), Presbyterian.

Aurukan, Gulf of Carpentaria (Superintendent, Rev. W. F. McKenzie), Presbyterian.

Mitchell River, Gulf of Carpentaria (Superintendent, J. W. Chapman), Anglican.

Mornington Island, Gulf of Carpentaria (Superintendent, Rev. R. H. Wilson), Presbyterian.

Purga, Ipswich (Superintendent, Adjutant J. C. Tunstall), Salvation Army.

Conduct.—No serious crime occurred. It was necessary to remove a few troublesome characters from the Gulf stations for tribal quarrelling and fighting. Most of these were removed to Thursday Island and, when given the choice, accepted employment on the pearling fleets. These quarrels arose because the deported men had tampered with the wives of others away at work. No troubles were experienced over drink, drugs, or gambling.

Religious Training.—All Missions claim encouraging results of the spiritual ministrations, and a growing understanding in the minds of the natives that Christianity is essential to their every day life, especially where the teaching aims at making religion a help and not a burden. The services and classes are well attended.

Education.—Satisfactory progress was made, although, owing to reductions in staff, several institutions worked under difficulties. As far as possible, the natives were utilised as junior teachers and monitors, and many showed marked adaptability.

One young married couple, of the Monamona Mission, qualified as Mission Assistants and volunteered and were accepted for mission work in New Guinea.

The curriculum wisely followed rural school system, in imparting instruction in the simple manual and domestic arts likely to better fit them for their own native life.

At the St. Paul's Hostel, Moa Island, nine girls were receiving high school domestic training. Some of these were supported by bursaries made possible by generous donors.

Industrial and Agricultural.—The following is a brief account of operations towards self support on the Mission Stations:—

Yarrabah.—The farms produced 34 tons of sweet potatoes, 90 sacks of cassava, 15 sacks of pumpkins, 200 bunches of bananas, 40 bags of maize, 15 bags of cowpeas. There was also sufficient milk for all desiring it.

New quarters were built for the school teacher and dormitory matron, several new village houses and a bush church at Buddabadoo. Three new dinghies were built and repairs made to boats and other plant.

Monamona.—A spacious barn and new stock-yards were constructed, also several new native cottages.

Timber hauling has been the main support. Sufficient sweet potatoes, cassava, bananas, pine-apples, corn, and green vegetables were grown for all needs, the estimated value being £700.

Ten acres of new ground have been put under cultivation. The cattle herd of 300 supplies a beast every fortnight for native rations.

Cape Bedford.—The Hope Valley plantation supplied thousands of coconuts to the main native villages at McIvor River for food purposes. The latter station raised 10 tons of sweet potatoes.

The fishing station at Elim earned £284 6s. 10d. with their boats, and £38 12s. 6d. and £6 were obtained from sales of gum and copra.

Lockhart River.—About 40 acres of scrub soil are under cultivation with bananas, papaws, cassava, sweet potatoes, etc. Some good coconut plantations are also bearing well.

St. Paul's, Moa Island.—A native fishing syndicate did fairly well using the cutter "Banzai" in fishing operations between mail and store trips. A similar party, who hired a vessel, failed financially, owing to extravagant providoring and lack of experienced leaders.

The gardens have not been so successful, owing to an invasion of bandicoots, but successful trial plots were grown of carrot, beetroot, cabbage, lettuce, and other vegetables.

Mapoon.—The school, boys' and girls' dormitories and Church have undergone improvements and renovation. A new village cottage has been built, and all timber, etc., cut for a new building as carpenter's shop, smithy, harness room, and paint store.

A large crop of pumpkins was grown by the garden village, and £40 worth was purchased by the Mission. Copra was made and sold, but the return was poor. Beche-de-mer returned £70 per ton.

Fancy work done by the women commands ready sale, and £223 6s. was earned by them in this way.

The retail store, besides supplying goods at appreciable saving on local charges, made a profit of £50.

Weipa.—Owing to exhaustion of the soil, the inability to combat the white ant pest, and increasing incidence of malaria, it was decided to transfer the station to a more suitable and accessible site at Jessica Point, where, already, some preparatory work has been done. This site offers excellent anchorage and landing, good soil for gardening, good grazing, water, and excellent positions for camp and village purposes.

Some of the inmates earned a little wages by supplying firewood for sale at Thursday Island.

Aurukun.—About 20 acres are under cultivation with sweet potatoes, pumpkins, melons, cowpeas, maize, sorghum, millet, etc.; but, owing to sickness in the staff and amongst the natives and the excessive dry spell, the farms were only moderately successful, as the station lacks water for irrigation.

The cattle herd number 100, but the country is not suitable for a larger herd.

The sawmill cut all timber required for improvements.

Mitchell River.—A new school building, 50 ft. by 20 ft., with two verandas, a cottage as matron's quarters, and a guest house, all of hardwood and fibrolite, were erected. Store sheds were erected at the river landing and at the creek crossing half-way.

Nine new native houses were built in the villages. Most of the fences have been repaired.

Owing to the Superintendent's absence for nine months, no gardens were planted.

The cattle herd, numbering 3,339, required careful attention, owing to dry weather and danger of bogging. Over 300 head had to be moved to water.

A new set of yards was erected, in a more accessible position, to facilitate mustering. The brandings were 603. One hundred head were killed for beef rations, and fifteen head sold.

Mornington Island.—Epidemics of sickness retarded the building development, but several new native cottages were built and a fine set of new poultry houses replaced the old ones, ruined by white ants. A useful sawbench, driven by oil engine, cuts all timber requirements, but the island has no timber of good millable quality.

The schoolboys worked the vegetable garden and raised 16 tons of vegetables. The men are engaged beche-de-mer fishing, timber getting, fencing, building, &c. A good aerodrome has been laid out for future visits of the aerial doctor.

The earnings from produce totalled £344, including £329 for sale of beche-de-mer and £12 for sale of dugong oil.

Purga.—The men of the village maintained their families, as far as possible, by obtaining employment as farm and station labour. When not employed they earned their keep by working on the Mission farm.

Of their earnings they banked £582, and withdrew for family requirements £874, reducing their savings account to £117.

NATIVE PROVISIONAL SCHOOLS.

Gayndah (Teacher C. Turner) Roll 14 (7 boys 7 girls).

Myora (Superintendent R. Morrison) Roll 13 (9 boys 4 girls).

Thursday Island (Teacher H. G. Simpson) Roll 56 (27 boys 29 girls).

Work and attendance have been satisfactory, and good reports have been received as to progress. The teacher at Thursday Island was absent for four months on sick leave, his school being carried on for a time by the Native Assistant, but afterwards by a relieving officer.

RECREATIONS.

At all institutions the necessity for healthy outdoor play and, for the evening hours, indoor amusement, is recognised. Such games as football, cricket, tennis, hockey, basket ball, rounders, &c., are always popular. Many places can boast of wireless receiving sets, and both young and old enjoy the music. Gramophones of a cheap type are often to be found in the more civilised village houses.

The native sports, such as swimming, boating, fishing, hunting, and rivalry with weapons of the chase, are encouraged, as also the corroborees, which may be heard almost nightly in the primitive camps.

The children in the dormitories may frequently be heard singing songs, learnt in school or picked up from favourite gramophone records.

At all stations the Christmas season was gladdened by the ever popular Christmas tree, with presents and good things for the festivities, usually provided by generous friends amongst the church supporters.

SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT.

On all stations, Government settlements as well as missions, can be seen encouraging indications of social progress, in the desire for better living conditions, pride in dress, and the neatness and cleanliness of the simple homes and, what is of greater value, concern in the orderly life of the community.

There have been some discouraging failures, owing to the mistake of trying to step too rapidly to the European plane, and because of the unfortunate clash between the old native laws and those of the white man's government. In one station in Torres Strait, when the young men, after visits to civilised centres on their fishing trips, desired to introduce jazz dances in the village, the old men firmly vetoed the idea, as being opposed to their tribal customs and bad for the morals of the island. In this they undoubtedly displayed wisdom.

Where the object in the social training has been to make them better natives, and not poor imitation whites, the results have been invariably gratifying.

GENERAL.

The expenditure on relief administration amounted to £46,214, which was supplemented by £13,117 from the Native Trust funds. The collections throughout the State of aboriginal earnings, wages, store sales, sales of produce of fishing vessels, settlements, &c., amounted to £153,171. This does not include the value of produce sold by Missions, or of fodder and food crops raised and used for home consumption.

It is desired, in conclusion, to record the Department's appreciation of the willing and loyal service of District Protectors and of the Police Officers under them, whose valuable assistance considerably lightened the task of administration.

The Superintendents and officers of the Settlements and Missions, who during the difficulties of the past year carried on cheerfully and loyally, deserve every commendation.

Much kindness and sympathy has been received from Government Medical Officers and District Hospitals, and especially the Brisbane General Hospital, which has willingly given its services in relief of aboriginal sick, no matter from where sent.

The unfailing courtesy of the officers of the Home Department and other Government Departments, and the loyal assistance of the Deputy Chief Protector and staff of the Head Office, is also gratefully acknowledged.

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 1931

Corporate Author: Queensland, Chief Protector of Aborigines

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