

Welfare Activities

The Board has a staff of five male Welfare Officers stationed at Kempsey, Leeton, Dubbo, Moree and Coff's Harbour.

Two lady Welfare Officers are located at Sydney, one of whom, a trained nurse, spends most of her time in country districts working chiefly among mothers, babies and adolescent girls.

The work of Welfare Officers is designed to supplement that of the Managers and Matrons of the various Stations. It lies primarily amongst those aborigines not residing in controlled situations. They are assiduous in their efforts to develop initiative and responsibility in the aboriginal people and to assist them in taking their place in the community.

They take every opportunity to bring before the white community, the aims and work of the Board, and have successfully enlisted the interest of increasing numbers of persons and organisations in aboriginal problems.

Aboriginal Wards and Children's Homes

This year, the Board has 232 wards under its control. These were admitted on the application of parents unable to care for their children, or were committed by a Children's Court in cases of neglect by parents.

It is an essential part of a Welfare Officer's duty to supervise substandard homes, and their efforts in the direction of rehabilitative oversight are undoubtedly fruitful in keeping to a minimum the number committed to the care of the Board. Welfare Officers paid 242 such supervisory visits in the year under review.

In the past 12 months, 73 wards were accommodated in the Board's Homes, and 159 were otherwise placed. Of these, 93 were placed with foster parents in private homes.

Modern thought on the question of the placement of dependent children, recognises that the best substitute for a child's own home, is a foster home. Institution care, at best, is a poor substitute for a normal home upbringing. With this in mind, and in view of the fact that many of the wards in the Board's care are of light caste, efforts were made late in 1955, to secure foster homes for these amongst white people. Furthermore, this was regarded as being a positive step in implementing the Board's policy of assimilation. Publicity was given in the city Press to this matter, and the response was most gratifying. It was possible to place over 30 children in such homes, and after a trial period of six months, the scheme has proved an unqualified success.

Foster parents are paid a weekly boarding-out allowance, and are further assisted in the payment of medical and dental expenses, and incidental fees for educational purposes.

Wards over school leaving age, are placed in employment, and a proportion of their wages is paid to a trust account available to the ward on attaining the age of eighteen years.

WOODENBONG WAYS

by A. Duggai

Station News

Top place this time goes to Constable Lanaghan of Woodenbong and Mr. E. Martin who have started off their Wednesday night Youth Club on the Station. The second Club Night saw over 40 young people having a wonderful time in the Recreation Hall.

More than £10 was raised by a group of Station Ladies who organised and ran a stall one Saturday afternoon. The money goes to help pay for new school uniforms.

Good news for Woodenbong when a group of Station men and boys volunteered to help fight a series of fires deliberately set by someone with a twisted sense of humour.

Mystery surrounded the doings of Merv. Skinner on the creek bank until it was discovered that he was getting some ground ready to plant a crop of pumpkins. Good work Merv!

We all regret the present illness of Mrs. Bertha Close and look forward to having her back with us again just as soon as she is well once more.

Mrs. Page enjoyed her escort duty to Sydney and the hospitality extended to her there.

Sporting Spot

A cup for the Best and Fairest was one of two trophies won by Warren Donnelly at the Boxing Tournament at Urbenville recently. Warren also won a blue ribbon at the Combined Schools Sports at Bonalbo.

What happened to your marching this year kids?

Nature Note

A couple of unusual egg-layers were observed at close quarters recently. A platypus located by Trevor Ord was the first to create such wide interest. Then, along came a porcupine! John Close found it, but Tom Close Snr. found the baby Ma Porcupine was carrying in her pouch.

Who has a young possum hidden in her handbag?

And Kids—How about leaving those birds' nests alone. A nest is all the home they have, you know!

The phrase, "to eat humble pie", meaning figuratively to come down in the world or adopt a submissive attitude, has an interesting origin. "Humble" is a corruption or pun on "umble" meaning the heart, liver and entrails of the deer. In the Middle Ages when the lord and his household dined, the venison pasty was served on a dais, but the umbles were made into a pie or the huntsman and his fellows, who took the lowest seats.