

the

Australian

aborigine

A recent report presented by the Victorian Aboriginal Group throws some interesting light on the study of Aborigines throughout the Commonwealth.

The native population of Australia is estimated at about 74,300 aborigines or people with a significant amount of aboriginal blood.

COMMONWEALTH TERRITORY (North and Central Australia)

Native Population : The total was 15,445, and an estimated number of 720 not yet included in the census of 1957. Welfare officers took two years to complete the register of 15,445 names, listing native and white names with tribes and locations.

There are 14 Government Settlements, 8 Government Depots and 14 Mission Stations in the Northern Territory.

Subsidies are provided for Missions and Station owners who support children and aged natives. Thirty children of mixed blood have been adopted in private homes and placed in institutions in the South to facilitate assimilation. The Administration meets the cost of the child's outfit and fare, and pays £300 per annum (less Child Endowment) towards maintenance and education.

There are now 27 special native schools, 11 on Government Settlements, 14 on Mission Stations and two on pastoral properties, attended by 1,843 native children out of the 2,500 children of school age in the Territory. Some will go on to secondary schools and others will be trained in a variety of industries. Dark and white children will attend the high school in Darwin on Vestry's site, but no full bloods have yet attained that level. Alice Springs is following suit with a Higher Primary School and a Leaving class, as well as a Catholic school to Intermediate standard.

In the unsettled parts of the Northern Territory adjoining Western Australia, two Government Settlements, at Hookers Creek, and Yuendumu, provide schools for the children, and from these stations patrols are sent out to keep in touch with the natives in the desert area. In June last year the first of two patrols under Mr. E. C. Evans, Chief Welfare Officer of the Administration was sent out from Yuendumu to Lakes Mackay and Hazlitt, which found about 150 natives living there in good condition, as to health and nutrition, though there is no surface water and stock could not find support. This patrol recommended the declaration of a large reserve along the W.A. border, to include the area round Lakes Mackay, McDonald, Wills, Hazlitt and White. Part of the Pintubi tribe live more or less permanently round Haast's Bluff Station, which was opened as a ration depot in 1941. In 1947 a Lutheran

Mission was permanently settled there, and a hospital built, conducted by the Misses Scherer for the Administration. This proved a valuable refuge for the desert members of the Pintubi tribe, many of whom came in the drought of 1956-57, when only 1½ inches of rain had fallen in the year. Some of the tribe are employed as stockmen by the Administration to provide meat for the area; others work in the gardens and hunt dingos for scalps in the winter.

New Stations were being planned at Phillips Creek, now removed to Warrabri, Daly River, Borroloola, and Maningreda. Emphasis on Government and Mission



Christmas cakes galore for hungry Australians ! Have you got yours yet ?