

1925-1926.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.
NEW SOUTH WALES.

ABORIGINES.

(REPORT OF BOARD FOR PROTECTION OF, FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1925.)

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The Chairman and Members of the Board for Protection of Aborigines to
The Under-Secretary, Chief Secretary's Department.

Office of Board for Protection of Aborigines,
No. 5 Richmond-terrace, Domain,

Sydney, 11th December, 1925.

Dear Sir,

In accordance with the established practice, we, the undersigned members of the Board for Protection of Aborigines, duly appointed under the provisions of the Aborigines Protection Act, 1909, have the honor to submit for the Chief Secretary's information, the following report of the operations of the Board during the period 1st July, 1924, to the 30th June, 1925, together with the usual particulars of the numbers, location, and present condition of the Aborigines throughout the State, and the means adopted for their relief as far as the funds at our disposal would permit.

GENERAL.

The Board was able to continue a general policy of improvements to buildings on the various Reserves and Stations. During the war, owing to a lack of funds, this phase of the Board's work had perforce to be somewhat neglected, and as a result many of the Stations were badly in need of a general overhaul. The work was put in hand about four years ago, and the majority of the Reserves have again been placed on a sound footing. Considerable work, however, still remains to be done, and this will, of course, be continued during the coming year.

The Board's Inspector has paid regular visits to all Aborigines' Reserves, the more important being inspected two or three times during the year. By this means the Board is able to maintain a uniformity of administration throughout the State, the Managers and Matrons of the various Stations and Institutions being constantly kept in touch with Head Office, through the Inspector.

The issue of rations, blankets, clothing and medical comforts to Aborigines throughout the State was continued, a close supervision being exercised to ensure that only deserving and needy cases secured assistance. In this connection the Board desire to point out that so far as is possible, the Aborigines are encouraged to help themselves. In suitable localities, particularly on the Northern Rivers, numbers of Aborigines occupy small farms which they are assisted to work under supervision—the land, of course, being vested in the Board, but the proceeds of their labours being paid to the Aborigines concerned.

In many instances assistance is given to able-bodied Aborigines who are out of employment on the understanding that the cost thereof is refunded. This is done not only to conserve the public funds, but to foster a very desirable spirit of independence.

On the 1st of June, 1925, a general census of Aborigines throughout the State was taken by the police in accordance with the Board's usual practice, and as the figures were also required for Federal purposes, the Board co-operated with the Commonwealth Statistician in the matter.

ABORIGINAL STATIONS.

Aboriginal Stations under the care of managers and matrons exist in various parts of the State, and on these the Aborigines live under conditions akin to communal village life. Most of the Stations have sale stores, in which groceries and other articles for which there is a ready demand are retailed at cost price, while there is also a butcher shop, dispensary, church, recreation hall, and school. In nearly every instance also a regular milk supply is provided free.

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The Managers of the Stations interest themselves in the direction and organisation of sports amongst the people, and at a number of places football and cricket teams compete with the surrounding districts. Tennis courts also have been established, and these recreations tend to keep the Aborigines on the Stations and away from the attractions of the towns, which are not altogether conducive to their wellbeing.

The residents are suitably housed in small cottages, which are built to street alignments, each place having its own garden, to which, in many instances, a water service is connected and maintained by the Board. It might here be stated that this is one of the matters which the Board has recently been able to take in hand, and windmills have been supplied to a number of Reserves, and it is hoped to eventually provide a good water supply for each of the Stations.

On a number of the stations cultivation is carried on with Aboriginal labour under the Manager's direction, the proceeds being paid into the Board's Produce Account and used for the maintenance of works of a reproductive nature, &c. On some of the Coastal Stations oyster culture is also successfully carried on.

TRANSFER OF STATION.

After several years' delay owing to a lack of funds the Board has at last been enabled to commence the removal of the Aboriginal Station at Euraba, near Boomi, which was found to be a most unsuitable locality on account of the absence of a natural water supply, to a new site known as Toomelah, situated in the same district but possessing all the requisite advantages. The work is about half completed, and it is anticipated that a complete transfer will be effected during the next few months.

COOTAMUNDRA HOME.

At Cootamundra the Board has established an up-to-date Training Home for Aboriginal girls, and to this institution neglected children, and girls who are in need of training for domestic service are transferred from various parts of the State. The Home usually accommodates about fifty inmates, and during the year under review fourteen were admitted and twelve sent to situations. The Home is performing a very important function in the Board's work, and many hundreds of girls have passed through it to situations found for them, and in which they are kept under constant supervision by the Board's Officers. The almost unanimous satisfactory reports received from employers of these girls testify to the soundness of the training they receive. The object of the Board is to rescue these children from the environment of camp life, where they have little chance of reaching 15 or 16 years of age without getting into trouble, and to afford them an opportunity to earn their own living and reach years of discretion in good surroundings and under helpful influences before they are thrown on their own responsibility.

Some criticism of this system has found expression, it being contended that the separation of the sexes will only tend to expedite the passing of the Aboriginal race.

The Board, however, takes a very different view. Its object is to save the children from certain moral degradation on the Reserves and Camps, and give them a chance to reach maturity, after which they are given every facility to return either on holiday or permanently, according to their wish, to their own districts, where they are expected to take up suitable employment. Here they have an opportunity of meeting people of their own color, and in many instances they marry and settle down in homes of their own. This it is contended is the only sane manner in which the problem can be successfully dealt with.

Cootamundra Home is an institution of which the Board is justly proud, and the numerous visitors who call there during the year almost invariably express their admiration of the work being done, the constant demand for the services of the trainees being also another evidence thereof.

KINCHELA HOME FOR BOYS.

A Home conducted on somewhat similar lines has been established for Aboriginal boys at Kinchela, on the Macleay River, for the reception, education and training of neglected and orphan boys, who otherwise would not have the advantage of proper care and attention. These boys, on completion of their training, are drafted out to situations on farms or stations, supervision being maintained over them in exactly the same manner as is the case with girls. It might here be stated that the major portion of the earnings of both the boys and the girls is collected by the Board and held in trust for them at compound interest. Thus the majority on the expiration of their apprenticeship have £60 and upwards, which they are permitted to draw in a lump sum or by instalments, provided the Board is satisfied that the money is required for a legitimate purpose and that the applicant will not be exploited by outsiders.

EDUCATION.

On the majority of the Reserves throughout the State and where the numbers justify it, schools have been established for Aboriginal children, where they receive elementary training in ordinary education and manual work. These schools are under the supervision of the Education Department, whose District Inspectors regularly visit same, and copies of whose reports are furnished to the Board. These disclose that satisfactory results are being achieved, and indeed in some instances especially in manual work, the Aborigines Schools more than hold their own with white schools.

Trouble is sometimes experienced with parents withdrawing their children from school without permission and taking them camping on the stock routes, &c. In such cases, when circumstances justify it, the parents are proceeded against under a section of the Aborigines Protection Act, and this is found to have the effect of ensuring that children shall have an uninterrupted school career.

On some of the Reserves which are not presided over by a Manager, a special arrangement has been made with the Teacher of the School to give the pupils a daily hot mid-day meal. This was found necessary as in numbers of instances it was ascertained that the children did not receive the benefit of the rations issued to them and sometimes arrived at school without having had any breakfast.

RATIONS, BLANKETS, AND CLOTHING.

Rations were issued to all old and infirm Aborigines and to able-bodied Aborigines out of employment provided they were known to be deserving cases, also to all children attending school. Meat was also issued to necessitous cases in localities where natural game was scarce. On the Stations rations are secured in bulk and distributed by the Manager in accordance with a definite scale laid down by the regulations.

The usual annual distribution of blankets and clothing to deserving cases was made, the blankets and one issue of clothing being distributed at the beginning of the winter and a summer issue of clothes being distributed at the commencement of the warm months.

CONCLUSION.

The Board wishes to record its indebtedness to the New South Wales Police, who act as its agents in all localities where the Board has not got its own officers. The Board has always enjoyed the greatest assistance and co-operation from the members of the Police Force, to whom it expresses its appreciation therefor.

Yours faithfully,

JAMES MITCHELL, Chairman.
 E. B. HARKNESS,
 ROBERT DICK,
 B. J. DOE,
 THEO. H. HILL,
 H. D. McLELLAND,
 A. W. GREEN, } Members.

RETURN OF ABORIGINES IN NEW SOUTH WALES AS AT 1st JUNE, 1925.

	Full Bloods.					Half-castes.				
	Adults.		Minors.		Grand Total.	Adults.		Minors.		Grand Total.
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.		Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	
Receiving aid	132	144	75	46	397	195	244	434	497	1,370
Not receiving aid	323	157	98	106	684	1,448	1,018	1,099	1,056	4,621
Totals	455	301	173	152	1,081	1,643	1,262	1,533	1,553	5,991

Distribution of above.

	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Grand Total.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Grand Total.
Living on reserves	167	123	84	61	435	474	415	574	523	1,986
Not living on reserves	288	178	89	91	646	1,169	847	959	1,030	4,005
Totals	455	301	173	152	1,081	1,643	1,262	1,533	1,553	5,991

	Quadroons.	Octoroons.
	Total Number.	Total Number.
Living on reserves	252	70
Receiving aid	159	30

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NSW Aborigines Protection Board

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