

Native Affairs—Information contained in Report of Director of Native Affairs for the Twelve Months ended 30th June, 1945.

Estimated Present Population.—Torres Strait Islanders, 3,660; aboriginals, 9,277; half-bloods, 6,451.

Although an effort was made to obtain a census population of aboriginals throughout Queensland and the Torres Strait area, due to war conditions an accurate figure cannot be arrived at. However, those quoted, although approximate, can be accepted as reliable. Included in the aboriginal population are 300 aboriginals located on Bentinck Island. Hitherto it has not been possible to assess the number of these aboriginals, in that until this year contact had not been established with these primitive people to such extent as would enable a fair estimate of their numbers. The contact was effected by the Superintendent, Mornington Island, of the Presbyterian Church Mission.

Contribution by Aboriginals to the War Effort.—As in previous war years, mobile gangs of aboriginals were organised to assist in the harvesting of essential food crops. Yarrabah Mission, in North Queensland, sent approximately 60 men to the maize harvesting at Atherton and cane fields in the Cairns district. From Palm Island Settlement, 120 men undertook the harvesting of cane in the Halifax area. Woorabinda Settlement had 20 aboriginals in the cane fields at Bundaberg, and 60 men completed the harvesting of arrowroot in the Coomera district. Labour for the harvesting of cotton in the Dawson Valley was supplied on demand. Cherbourg Settlement had approximately 100 men harvesting peanuts at Kingaroy and cane at Bundaberg.

The number of men in these mobile gangs was in the vicinity of 400 and their earnings for the year totalled £60,000. They were controlled and supervised by departmental officers and generally their work and industry can be regarded as satisfactory.

In addition to this labour, there are approximately 3,500 aboriginals in various callings throughout the State, the majority being engaged in the pastoral industry. Their earnings totalled £210,000. Particularly in the west and north-west of Queensland it can be claimed that the aboriginal workers have played a notable part in the pastoral industry during the war. Apart from the employment of the men as ordinary stockmen and station hands, there are numerous cases of aboriginals and half-bloods being employed as Head Stockmen and in other responsible positions vacated by whites whose services were required in the Armed Forces.

Government Settlements.—Government settlements are established at Cherbourg Aboriginal Settlement near Murgon, Woorabinda Aboriginal Settlement, west of Rockhampton, Palm Island Aboriginal Settlement, north of Townsville.

The industrial development of these settlements was considerably retarded during the war, principally by reason of the determined policy of sending every available worker from the settlements to industries—pastoral, farming, &c., in an effort to meet the shortage of labour and to ensure the maximum production of foodstuffs for the nation. However, during the current year an amendment of this policy has been possible to such extent that a very considerable amount of leeway has been made up on the settlements and an intensive and progressive policy of greater development is now in full swing as indicated.

Woorabinda.—Production of Vegetables: For the first time in the history of this settlement, vegetables have been produced in such quantities as to meet the local demand of a population of 800 and to have surplus available for distribution to Westwood Sanatorium and Baralaba Hospital. With the installation of irrigation from Mimosa Creek 10 acres are under vegetable crops, 20 acres prepared for fodder crops and as an experiment, it is intended to plant 8 acres with peanuts; *Citrus Orchard:* In an effort to demonstrate that this settlement can ultimately be made self-supporting, a commencement has been made in the establishment of a citrus orchard and already 350 trees have been planted and are making good growth. The inability to obtain young trees has been responsible for a hold-up in this development, but it is expected that this year a further 700 trees will be available and planted; the ultimate intention is to have an orchard of approximately 3,000 trees. Under ordinary circumstances, this orchard will give employment to a large number of aboriginals and should provide a new financial return to offset present Revenue expenditure. *Cattle:* This settlement has an excellent Hereford beef cattle herd of 3,000 head. This number represents the safe maximum carrying capacity of the Woorabinda run of 55,000 acres. Over the last twelve months, to ensure a greater development of the run, a tractor and dam-sinking plant were provided. The result is that two excellent dams have been completed and provide an assurance of water in paddocks which previously lacked that facility.

Aboriginals gangs of ringbarkers are now employed and it is expected that a further 15,000 acres will be suckered and ringbarked during the coming year. Negotiations are proceeding for acquiring a further area of 20,000 acres of good fattening country to enable the cattle industry on Woorabinda to be placed on such a footing as will materially assist in the Department's aim of achieving complete financial independence for the settlement. During the year, 419 cattle from this settlement were sold, the return being £2,487. Additional to these numbers were 300 fat cattle killed to satisfy the settlement's meat requirements.

Cherbourg.—Cherbourg Aboriginal Settlement has never been favourably situated from an agricultural aspect, and little scope for development greater than exists can be anticipated. However, initial steps have been taken for the establishment of a poultry run. This settlement carries 1,000 head of Hereford beef cattle and consistent difficulty has been met in drought time, due to the absence of water on a large area of the run, and the impossibility of its conservation in dams. During the current year, a boring plant was purchased and to date, excellent water has been obtained at a depth of 90 feet to water paddocks, which previously, except for a few months of the year following rains, were useless. Good progress is being made with a second hole, and it is reasonably safe to anticipate that within a further nine months, additional bores will be put down on Cherbourg Settlement to such an extent that the nightmare of water shortage in the cattle raising activities will have disappeared.

Palm Island Settlement.—This settlement is not favourably situated for extensive development, in that the available agricultural land is limited to approximately 50 acres and the cattle carrying capacity for a dairy herd is 60 head. However, in an endeavour to obtain the maximum production, additional farming plant and a small irrigation plant have been provided, particularly with the intention of increasing the production of tropical fruits. The programme set for this year is 6 acres of pineapples, 6 acres of bananas and 6 acres of papaws.

Hitherto the production of these crops has been limited, but seasonal vegetable crops have always been produced consistent with the area available and to such extent as would meet, for several months of the year, the requirements of Palm Island population of 1,400 and the Fantome Island V.D. Hospital and Leprosarium.

Aboriginal Training Farm.—In January, 1945, a mixed farm of 703 acres, of which 130 acres are irrigable, was purchased from accumulated aboriginal funds, the intention being that this farm is to be economically worked and developed to its maximum capacity in dairying, general farming and pig raising and in any other rural pursuits from which a return can be obtained.

It is to provide facilities for the training of aboriginals in modern agricultural procedure to equip them with the practical knowledge necessary for them to be fitted into rural industry, either as workers or land holders. This applies particularly to rural school trainees showing any aptitude or inclination for farm work.

Stock Taken Over.—90 head of milking stock; 7 head of mixed horses and 51 pigs; general farm implements; 3 acres of grassy lucerne.

From date of taking over to the 30th June, produce to the value of £564 has been sold, viz.,—Dairy, £349; pig sales, £98; sale of produce (potatoes), £117.

Improvements Effected.—Two good quality Jersey bulls purchased from Palen Creek; 1 boar purchased from Palen Creek and 1 sow through Mr. Jones of Westbrook; 12 acres of potatoes planted in August; land prepared for the planting of an additional 12 acres of lucerne; land in readiness for planting 15 acres of maize and milo; modern dairy in course of erection and preliminary work undertaken for the erection of pig yards which will be operating when the dairy is completed; all old fencing replaced.

Machinery Purchased.—Tandem disc harrow; mower hay rake; double row cultivator.

Electric power will be installed by the end of the year to provide power for 4 pumping points and electrification of all other power required on the farm and light.

Negotiations are proceeding for the purchase of six pure bred Jersey heifers, the idea being to ultimately establish a pure Jersey herd.

Approximately 12 boys are receiving tuition in general farm work and already two such trainees have been placed on the staff and thus replaced aboriginal adults previously employed.

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Based on present prices and the continued development of this farm, annual returns should be:—Cream, £1,000; pigs, £500; sale of farm produce, £500.

Manual Training and Domestic Science.—The manual training classes for boys and the domestic science classes for girls established on Cherbourg Settlement have recorded a successful year. The number of boys attending the manual training classes was 22 of whom 12 receive extra tuition on the Aboriginal Training Farm. It is not possible to visualise every boy who enters the manual training classes ultimately becoming a skilled worker on the settlement or outside, but to date experience has shown that a very fair proportion of the lads having received initial tuition, settle down as student carpenters, plumbers, leather workers or farmers, and during the year under review, several of them have joined the native artisan gangs on the settlement. Through lack of material and the inability to obtain a foreman carpenter, progress on the erection of the proposed modern workshop has been retarded, but it is hoped in the new year to make an early start on this important undertaking. The girls in the domestic science classes are receiving capable tuition in cooking and general housekeeping, consistent with their status. Visiting Ministers and Parliamentarians have been given the opportunity of inspecting the work carried out in this section.

Education.—The total number of children receiving primary education in the State is 2,400. To obtain the best results from the existent primary education system, selected promising boys and girls are given the opportunity of secondary education with a view to ultimately utilising them in semi-administrative positions on the Government settlements and church missions or to fit them to take their place outside the aboriginal communities. At present there are five boys in All Souls' Secondary School, Charters Towers, one girl in St. Anne's Secondary School, Ravenswood, two girls in St. Mary's Secondary School, Herberton, one girl in St. Anne's Secondary School, Townsville, one boy in the Convent at Halifax and one boy at the Roman Catholic Agricultural College at Abergowrie. The experiment of secondary education for these aboriginal children will be watched with interest.

Sawmilling.—Sawmilling activities have been carried out on the three settlements during the year. At Woorabinda, a breaking down plant is urgently needed and negotiations are proceeding to secure it, and thus considerably improve the output. Timber supplies on Palm Island Settlement have been practically cut out and the small return from this mill is consequently explained. Sawmills on Government settlements are an economic necessity. The cost of production of timber is approximately one half the market price and without such facilities, a progressive building policy could never be undertaken.

Aboriginal Accounts.—The total amount held in trust in the savings bank accounts of aboriginals is £308,600. Every facility is provided for aboriginals to withdraw within reason against their savings bank accounts. In the case of a deceased aboriginal, immediately following death being reported, action is taken to distribute the estate amongst the next-of-kin.

The number of estates so administered was 103, and the amount made available to next-of-kin was £6,593.

Exemptions.—Where it is apparent that a full-blood or half-blood is capable of controlling his own affairs and can safely take his place in the white community, a certificate of exemption from the Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Act is granted. Experience has shown that with the majority of people so exempted they can settle down in their new sphere of life, and particularly in North Queensland it is expected that they will become useful citizens, and even if only in a small way will assist in populating that area and obtain regular employment in callings suited to them. The number of such exemptions granted during the year under review was 111.

Social and Welfare Associations.—It has been possible during the year to organise on the three Government settlements Social and Welfare Associations composed entirely of aboriginals, but directed by the white staff, the idea being for the people to provide for themselves social amenities and to promote recreational activity. Generally, the association or parent body directs all sub-committees responsible for the organisation of all branches of sport, and particularly arranges the holding of an Annual Show.

At Palm Island and Woorabinda settlements, Annual Shows displaying aboriginal handicraft, needlework, garden produce, culinary and flower exhibits, &c., were held on the 18th June, and in their initial attempt they achieved outstand-

ing success. The Cherbourg Show, which will be on more elaborate lines than the other two, is scheduled for mid-September, and it is anticipated that the aboriginals of that settlement will indicate to the white public their ability to organise a function on lines comparable with any country show. Generally, the aim is to stimulate through these Annual Shows the interest by the aboriginal people in their settlements, home life, &c., and to encourage them to display, in competition, the result of their labours.

Torres Strait Islanders.—As was recorded in last year's Annual Report, every able-bodied Torres Strait Islander is in the armed forces, the number of men involved being approximately 700.

During the year, by direction, the Director of Native Affairs proceeded to Thursday Island and there, in conference with the island councillors, a plan for post-war rehabilitation was formulated. Naturally, these island seamen continue to look to the marine industry, principally pearl shell and trochus shell, for their post-war employment and the aim is to rehabilitate them in that industry when they are discharged from the armed forces.

During the absence of the men in the army, the older men, women and children continue with their dinghies, canoes and cutters to gather marine produce to such extent that trochus shell to the value of £13,290 was won and disposed of. At the request of the Commonwealth authorities, pearl shell for commercial trading in New Guinea was fished by the Torres Strait Islanders, supervised by the Protector of Islanders and the value of such produce obtained was £2,738.

Island Industries Trading Store at Badu Island has continued to give good service to the island people. This institution caters for the islanders through thirteen branch stores located on every inhabited island in Torres Strait. It retails food, clothing, &c., and buys produce from the islanders and distributes the profits for the general welfare of the people.

Church Missions.—The undermentioned church missions are located in Queensland:—

Church of England Missions.—Lockhart River Mission, via Coen; Mr. H. E. Johnson, Superintendent; Yarrabah Mission, via Cairns; Mr. C. G. Brown, Superintendent; Mitchell River Mission, via Normanton; Mr. F. W. Carrington, Superintendent.

Presbyterian Missions.—Mapoon Mission, via Thursday Island; Mr. F. A. Cane, Superintendent; Weipa Mission, via Thursday Island; Mr. J. S. Winn, Superintendent; Aurukun Mission, via Thursday Island; Mr. W. F. McKenzie, Superintendent; Mornington Island Mission, via Burketown; Mr. X. J. B. McCarthy, Superintendent; Edward River Mission, via Thursday Island; Mr. J. W. Chapman, Superintendent.

Seventh Day Adventists.—Mona Mona Mission, Oak Forest, via Cairns; Mr. L. A. Borgas, Superintendent.

Plymouth Brethren.—Doomadgee Mission, via Burketown; Mr. M. G. H. Read, Superintendent.

Salvation Army.—Purga Mission, via Ipswich; Mr. O. Smith, Superintendent.

Superintendents and other staffs during the trying years of the war have consistently rendered excellent service in the care and protection of their wards. At times, particularly in the far north, the absence of supplies, even for the Mission staffs, made it most difficult to carry on, but never at any time was there any hesitation by these philanthropic workers in giving of their best in the interests of their coloured communities. Wherever possible, developmental work has been carried on and labour made available for the assistance of the rural industries of the State.

Scouting.—Boy Scout troops are established at Palm Island under Scout Master F. A. Krause, and at Cherbourg Aboriginal Settlement, under Scout Master H. Pascoe. Both of these troops have been inspected by officers of the Boy Scouts Association and most favourable reports on the organisation and training of the boys have been forthcoming. Amongst aboriginal boys, the Scout movement provides an effective means of uplift, training and discipline and generally its value is reflected in the conduct and bearing of the boys who receive their training.

Appreciation.—It is desired to express gratitude to the staff of Head Office, Government settlements, Police Protectors of Aboriginals, medical officers and hospitals for the care and assistance which they have rendered to aboriginals.

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Corporate Author: Queensland Parliament

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