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(SECOND SESSION.)

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.
NEW SOUTH WALES.



ABORIGINES.

(ANNUAL REPORT OF BOARD FOR PROTECTION OF, FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1932.)

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, 16 December, 1932.

**Report of Board for Protection of Aborigines for the year ended
30th June, 1932.**

Office of Board for Protection of Aborigines,
No. 5 Richmond Terrace, Domain,
Sydney, 16 November, 1932.

The Under Secretary, Chief Secretary's Department.

Dear Sir,

In accordance with the established practice, we, the undermentioned 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, 1931, to 30th June, 1932, together with the usual particulars of the numbers, location, and present condition of the Aborigines throughout the State, and means adopted for their relief as far as the funds at our disposal would permit.

GENERAL.

The period under review has been one of strain and difficulty generally, owing, of course, to world-wide depression, and among the first to be affected thereby were the Aborigines. The services of able-bodied men and women, who were formerly employed on stations and farms, etc., were in most cases dispensed with, and as a consequence they were, of course, compelled to turn to the Board for necessary sustenance and other assistance.

Some little confusion was caused in connection with applications by persons of Aboriginal blood for ordinary unemployment food relief, while other Aborigines were drawing rations from this Department. The matter was finally put upon a proper basis by the Minister issuing a direction that in cases where Aborigines had formerly maintained themselves independent of the Board they were to be allowed to draw food relief, while those who had formerly depended on the Board for assistance when in need must continue to do so.

The Board's expenditure in practically every direction, other than for the purchase of food, was cut to the barest minimum, but while the necessity for the strictest economy is recognised, the Board again desires to place on record its anxiety concerning the housing of Aborigines at various centres throughout the State, which at many places is in a serious condition owing to years of neglect due to inadequacy of funds. It is hoped that the Government will see its way to make some money available for the purpose, the expenditure of which also, on local materials and labour, should help to provide work and thus assist to relieve unemployment.

FAMILY ENDOWMENT.

The administration of Family Endowment by the Board was continued during the year, an amount of £13,631 8s. 10d. being handed over by the Family Endowment Department, and expended on behalf of the children concerned in providing food, clothing, bedding, optical, dental, and medical attention, and other miscellaneous items of direct or indirect benefit to the children concerned.

In a few approved cases only direct payment was permitted, same being subject to investigation and report by local officers, who satisfied themselves that the money was being expended in the manner intended.

ABORIGINAL STATIONS.

Reports received from the Managers of the various Aboriginal Stations all disclose large increases in population, due to the influx of Aborigines who, owing to loss of employment, have been glad to take advantage of the sanctuary provided.

Efforts are being made on numbers of stations to reduce expenditure by the cultivation of potatoes, turnips, and other vegetables which form part of the ration scale.

Having secured pumps and second-hand piping and engines, pumping plants have been, or are now in process of being installed, at a number of centres where a water supply was urgently needed, and it is felt that, with these facilities and improved housing conditions, the Aboriginal Stations which are under the control of Teacher-Managers, who are assisted by their wives who act as Matrons, will establish and maintain a standard of comfort which will prove an attraction to those Aborigines who have formerly been inclined to live elsewhere, under, generally, most undesirable conditions, and in this connection it might be appropriate to mention that the Board, realising the inadequacy of its powers under existing legislation, contemplates seeking certain amendments to its Act, which will enable it to, among other things, concentrate on its Reserves, persons of Aboriginal blood, who are now living on stock routes and alongside of towns, and maintain a definite control over them, so that they will not be at liberty to leave without permission.

A policy of concentration must result in a considerable improvement in the living conditions of the Aborigines concerned, as, subject to the Board having sufficient money for its housing requirements, that housing will be erected at a lesser number of centres, and will be principally on Aboriginal Stations, in village communities, where there will be water supplies, decent sanitation, and distribution of rations from bulk stores, a more liberal meat issue consequent upon growing and killing of meat on the place, and educational facilities for the children—the whole under resident supervision.

TRAINING HOMES.

Satisfactory routine work has been carried on at the Training Homes at Cootamundra and Kinchela, the former accommodating girls and the latter boys. Both these homes accommodate children who are generally removed from unsatisfactory surroundings, trained, and then placed in suitable situations, the girls in domestic service and the boys on farms and stations.

The homes are a feature of the community life of the localities in which they are situated, and everything is done to foster in the inmates the feeling that they have a definite place as citizens, and, judging from results which have already been achieved, there can be no doubt that this effort to inculcate self-respect and independence has met with a large measure of success. Very many of the girls and boys who passed through these homes years ago are now married, and in a large number of instances have since maintained themselves independent of Government assistance, having practically graduated into the general community.

At Bomaderry, on the South Coast, a Children's Home is maintained by the United Aborigines' Mission, the Board supplying rations, medical attention, and other assistance. This home accommodates young children, the Board having fixed the maximum age at 10 years, after which the children are transferred to either Cootamundra or Kinchela.

EDUCATION.

Satisfactory reports were received from District School Inspectors concerning Aborigines' schools, which have been established at many centres where the Aboriginal population justified same. The work in these schools is up to third class standard, and manual training is made a feature.

The children respond readily to tuition which appeals to their sense of form and colour, and they also have a particular liking for music and singing. Very creditable results have been achieved, and prizes have been secured by the pupils of the Board's schools at numbers of district shows where exhibits of manual work have been entered.

EMPLOYMENT.

In normal times able-bodied Aborigines experience little difficulty in securing suitable employment, either in domestic service or, in the case of the men, as bush workers, but during the past year the large majority of them have perforce been idle. To meet the situation and to assist the able-bodied men to maintain their self-respect, the Board has, in return for rations and other assistance, provided employment on its Reserves, and a good deal of such work as fencing, road making, formation of gardens, drainage, etc., has been carried out.

NUMBERS AND EXPENDITURE.

On 1st June a census of Aborigines throughout the State was taken, and the figures made available to the State and Federal Government Statisticians. These disclosed that in New South Wales there remain 913 full bloods and 8,767 half-castes, in the care and protection of which an amount of £55,517 was expended, including items within the Votes of the Aborigines Protection Board and of the Departments of Public Health, Education, Government Stores, and Resumed Properties.

HEALTH.

The general health of the Aborigines throughout the State, with the exception of one or two centres where influenza and whooping cough were prevalent, was satisfactory. The Board works in the closest co-operation with the Department of Public Health, and at practically every centre facilities are available, either through the local District Hospital or Government Medical Officer, for the supervision and treatment of any sickness that may arise.

The Police and Managers of Stations have authority to at once requisition the services of the Hospital or Medical Officer, as the case may be, should the necessity arise, and everything is done to keep a close check on this phase of the Board's work, it being obvious that the Aborigines are of considerable importance in the general community, from the standpoint of public health also.

Stores of simple remedies, etc., are maintained on all Reserves where there is an officer in charge, together with ordinary first aid equipment.

CONCLUSION.

Before concluding, the Board again desires to express its appreciation of the assistance and co-operation received by it from other public Departments and from the members of the Police Force throughout the State, without whose aid it would, in many instances, find it difficult to carry out its functions.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed)

W. H. CHILDS,
Chairman.
E. B. HARKNESS,
Vice-Chairman.
ROY S. VINCENT,
ROBERT DICK,
W. J. SCULLY.
A. McCLELLAND.
A. W. GREEN.
H. J. BATE.
B. C. HARKNESS.
Members of the Board.

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