

1935.

(SECOND SESSION.)

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

ABORIGINES.

(ANNUAL REPORT OF BOARD FOR PROTECTION OF, FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1934.)

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Report of Board for Protection of Aborigines for the year ended 30th June, 1934.

Office of Board for Protection of Aborigines,
No. 5 Richmond Terrace, Domain,
Sydney, 31 December, 1934.

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 honour to submit for the Chief Secretary's information, the following report of the operations of the Board during the period 1st July, 1933 to 30th June, 1934, 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.

Although economic conditions had not returned to normal, there was a noticeable improvement so far as the Aborigines were concerned. There was more employment available and considerable numbers of them were also engaged on relief works.

With increasing employment it is hoped that expenditure on rations and other assistance will gradually be reduced, although it is doubtful whether pre-depression figures will again be reached, in view of the fact that large numbers of Aborigines who were formerly residing outside the Board's reserves, and in many cases living under undesirable conditions on stock routes, etc., found it necessary to avail themselves of the sanctuary provided for them, and having had an opportunity of contrasting the better conditions will, it is hoped, elect to remain permanently.

The population of the Board's stations and reserves has increased, but this is desirable not only for the sake of the Aborigines themselves, but also in the public interest.

BUILDINGS.

During the year new dwellings were erected for Aborigines at the following centres:—

Bellbrook, 7.	Brewarrina, 5.	Wallaga Lake, 3.
Cumeroongunga, 7.	Jervis Bay, 5.	Moonahcullah, 1.
Taree, 7.	Quirindi, 4.	Toomelah, 1.
Pilliga, 6.		

Repairs and additions were also effected to buildings at Cabbage Tree Island, Quirindi, Roseby Park, Ulgundahi Island, Brungle, Cowra, and Casino, while other improvements such as the erection of workshops, storerooms and milking yards were effected at a number of centres.

Recreation halls were erected at Taree and Tomelah.

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Apart from the above, and as a result of special representations which were made to the Government, funds were provided for the transfer of a large number of Aborigines, who were camped near the town water supply at Yass, to a new site on the opposite side of the Town, a contract being let for the erection of sixteen buildings and a school building, the connection of a water supply, and the fencing of the new area.

The Board is particularly gratified at the completion of this work, the necessity for which has been apparent for a number of years, and which was very necessary in the interests also of the townspeople of Yass.

At the beginning of the summer of 1933 there were indications that the water supply of the Aboriginal Station at Carowra Tank, via Ivanhoe, was likely to fail, the tank itself, from which supplies were drawn, and which had never previously failed, becoming dangerously low, which was also apparently affecting the water itself.

The transfer of the population, which numbered over 200 persons, therefore became a matter of urgency, as there was not any other source of water supply within reach of the reserve.

After sites had been examined at Euabalong and other centres, it was finally decided to remove the entire reserve to an area of 1,000 acres, being portion of Albemarle Station, situated about 7 miles from the town of Menindie, and located on the banks of the Darling River.

The Government provided a special grant of £1,000, and the transfer was successfully completed without mishap towards the end of September. Since that date dwellings have been erected for the Aborigines, a residence constructed for the Assistant Teacher-Manager and his wife, the old Police residence at Menindie, which was being replaced by another building, was removed and re-erected for the use of the Manager and Matron, a school, tool sheds, and storerooms were constructed, and a pumping plant installed.

There yet remains to be erected a treatment room, verandahs to the dwellings, and sundry other improvements such as boundary fencing, etc., upon the completion of which the Board will have a comfortable and well-furnished station.

In connection with housing generally, it might be added that the Board is now constructing a standardised type of building for the accommodation of the Aborigines, consisting of two rooms, each 12 feet x 10 feet, with 10-foot verandah front and back, the latter being also enclosed where additional accommodation is necessary.

FAMILY ENDOWMENT.

The Board continued to administer family endowment payable in respect of Aborigines, and an amount of £18,562 4s. was expended during the year on behalf of the endowed children, who were provided with food, clothing and other necessities, and in cases where the credit permitted additional home comforts, such as beds and bedding, crockery, and furniture were purchased, thus raising the home standard, with material and moral benefit to the children concerned.

In certain cases where reports appear to warrant it, direct payment of endowment was permitted, the Board's officers keeping the children in question under notice, with a view to ensuring that the parents expended the money wisely and in their best interests.

ABORIGINAL STATIONS.

From reports received from the twenty-two Aboriginal Stations throughout the State, it was disclosed that good work has been done, and at most of these centres considerable improvements have been effected. On these stations the Aborigines are under the supervision of a Teacher-Manager and a Matron, which ensures a better standard of living, which results from sympathetic discipline, and which noticeably encourages the residents to be self-respecting and self-reliant.

As an example of this, it might be stated that all able-bodied men who are unable to secure employment outside and who have to be supplied with rations on the reserve, are required, in return therefore, to perform a reasonable amount of work, as directed by the Manager. This work is performed without demur, the men understanding that they are thus earning their keep, rather than receiving it as a mere charity.

Where possible the Managers of the various stations also organise sports for the Aborigines, teams competing in district football and cricket matches, etc., which all tends to a healthy self-contentment, and the feeling that the Aboriginal is an accepted and recognised citizen of the State.

Every year a policy of tree planting is followed up, Managers being supplied with quantities of young, natural and ornamental trees which, as time goes on, will add considerably to the appearance and comfort of the reserves.

The houses also are, as required, being painted in standardised colours, thus giving the stations a uniform appearance.

A portable saw bench, which was purchased by the Board about two years ago, and which is operated by an internal combustion engine, continues to provide timber for building purposes for a number of centres, at a very reasonable price. At the

present time this bench is located at Pilliga Aboriginal Station. Large quantities of cypress pine are being milled for buildings being erected at that centre, and at Brewarrina, Quirindi and other places within such distance as permits of economical transport.

During the year 18 tons of sawn timber were sent to Brewarrina, 24 tons to Quirindi, while 30,000 super feet were used at Pilliga itself. Later on it is proposed to remove the outfit to the Aboriginal Station at Toomelah, via Boomi, where additional buildings are required.

ABORIGINES' RESERVES AND CAMPS.

In addition to the Aboriginal Stations there are a large number of reserves and camps throughout the State on which Aborigines are residing under supervision of the nearest Police, who visit and report upon them regularly.

It is the Board's desire to, as far as possible, reduce the numbers of these smaller reserves, and encourage the Aborigines thereon to concentrate on the larger stations, where it is possible to provide much better conditions.

At some centres Aborigines have taken up their residence in unauthorised camps, constructed of bagging, petrol tins, etc., and it is intended to deal with these when a Bill to amend the present Aborigines' Protection Act, and which is now before the Government for consideration, has been given Parliamentary sanction.

Of course, the removal of these people to the Board's reserve will involve the erection of necessary dwellings, the provision of funds for which, and for housing generally, is always a matter of concern to the Board.

TRAINING HOMES.

Satisfactory work of a routine nature was continued at the Board's Training Homes at Cootamundra and Kinchela, where girls and boys are respectively accommodated. Each of these institutions has a capacity of about forty-five children and receive orphans and neglected cases, who cannot be suitably provided for within their own districts. The girls are trained for domestic service, and the boys for farm and station work, and upon reaching a suitable age are drafted out to approved situations where they are apprenticed, and kept under careful supervision.

Upon the termination of their period of apprenticeship they are returned to their own districts, under the supervision of the local Manager, where they are permitted to secure further employment, or to return to their former employer should they so wish. Naturally, numbers elect to remain in their home districts, where they later marry and settle down.

At Bomaderry there is a Children's Home, conducted by the United Aborigines' Mission, under the supervision of the Board, which also supplies rations, medical attention, and other assistance. This home provides for children up to 10 years of age, upon attaining which they are transferred to Cootamundra or Kinchela as the case may be.

EDUCATION.

Aborigines' Schools, for which a special syllabus was prepared by the Department and approved by the Minister for Education, are established on all the Board's stations, and at certain other centres where the Aboriginal population warrants it.

These schools are regularly visited by the District School Inspectors, copies of whose reports are sent to the Board, and which disclose that very satisfactory work is being done. Many of these schools exhibit their work in the District Shows, with most gratifying results, the work eliciting favourable comment from the general public and the local press.

NUMBERS AND EXPENDITURE.

On 30th 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 1,008 full bloods and 9,373 half-castes, a total of 10,381 (as compared with 9,688 the previous year), in the care and protection of which an amount of £54,082 was expended (as compared with £57,271 the previous year), including items within the votes of the Aborigines' Protection Board and the Departments of Public Health, Education, Government Stores and Resumed Properties, and allowing for a deduction in respect of revenue and receipts amounting to £2,132.

HEALTH.

It is again pleasing to state that the general health of the Aborigines throughout the State has been satisfactory. There were not any serious epidemics or outbreaks of sickness to cause undue alarm.

At Brewarrina the work of combating eye trouble was continued, a fully qualified nurse, who also acts as Assistant-matron, being permanently employed to take charge of the treatment room previously erected by the Board, and to carry into effect the instructions of the local Government Medical Officer, who visits the reserve at regular intervals under the direction of the Director-General of Public Health.

Consideration is now being given the establishment of similar treatment rooms at Cumerroogunga and Menindie for the treatment of all cases of ordinary illness.

All stations are provided with supplies of simple remedies for the use of the Manager and Matron, in the treatment of minor ailments, while the services of the local Hospital or Government Medical Officer are requisitioned where circumstances appear to warrant same. At centres remote from medical and hospital aid, the services of the local member of the Bush Nursing Association are utilised.

CONCLUSION.

The Board again desires to place on record its appreciation of the services and assistance rendered to it by the members of the New South Wales Police Force, the members of which act as the Board's agents at places where it does not possess its own officers, and without whose co-operation it would be difficult to carry on the work.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) W. H. CHILDS,
Chairman.

(Sgd.) E. B. HARKNESS,
Vice-Chairman.

(Sgd.) B. C. HARKNESS,	} Members of the Board.
(Sgd.) R. S. VINCENT,	
(Sgd.) H. J. BATE,	
(Sgd.) A. McCLELLAND,	
(Sgd.) W. J. SCULLY,	
(Sgd.) A. W. GREEN,	
(Sgd.) E. SYDNEY MORRIS,	