

1866.

VICTORIA.

FIFTH REPORT

OF

THE CENTRAL BOARD

APPOINTED TO WATCH OVER THE INTERESTS

OF

THE ABORIGINES

IN

THE COLONY OF VICTORIA.

PRESENTED TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY'S COMMAND.



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REPORT.

SIR,

Melbourne, 30th April, 1866.

The Central Board appointed to watch over the interests of the Aborigines, have the honor to submit the Fifth Report of their proceedings.

The system of management now in operation under the Board is well understood, and, on the whole, it works satisfactorily.

The Honorary Correspondents have discharged their duties carefully, and it is certain that the blacks were never so well cared for as now. The same difficulties, however, present themselves from time to time; many of the blacks are troublesome and not easy to manage; but those who remember the condition of the blacks in former years, must admit that their state is now one of comparative comfort.

Those who are in want can always obtain food and clothing, and the sick have medical attendance and medical comforts. The station at Coranderrk becomes every day more and more important. The Central Board formerly were unable to make any provision for black and half-caste children who were abandoned by their parents; now they are able to send them to a good school, where they are taught to work and to maintain themselves by their labor.

SUPPLY OF STORES.

The quantities of stores issued to the Aborigines from the 1st of August, 1864, to the 31st July, 1865, were as follows:—

Flour	...	...	...	...	...	108,610	lbs.
Tea	...	...	...	...	...	2,991 $\frac{3}{4}$	„
Sugar	...	...	...	...	...	28,617	„
Tobacco	...	...	...	...	...	1,983 $\frac{1}{4}$	„
Rice	...	...	...	...	...	3,024	„
Oatmeal	...	...	...	...	...	450	„
Soap	...	...	...	...	...	3,181	„
Meat	...	...	...	...	...	787	„
Blankets	...	...	...	...	...	1,175	pairs
Serge Shirts	...	...	...	...	...	548	
Twill Shirts	...	...	...	...	...	464	
Trousers	...	...	...	...	...	790	pairs
Jumpers (boys')	...	...	...	...	...	183	
Dresses	...	...	...	...	...	479	
Petticoats	...	...	...	...	...	424	
Chemises	...	...	...	...	...	111	
Tomahawks	...	...	...	...	...	142	
Pint and Quart Pots	...	...	...	...	...	280	

In addition to the above, there have been issued: Salt, medicines, medical comforts, pipes, fish-hooks, thread, twine, needles, calico, implements, &c., &c., respecting which full particulars are given in the table appended to this Report.

The Central Board have had to complain very frequently of delay in the forwarding of the stores to the several stations. Many delays occurred during the past year, and the matter was brought under the consideration of



the Honorable the Chief Secretary, and the scheme proposed by the Board once more submitted to him. He was pleased to entertain the subject favorably, and finally notified his approval of the plan which they laid before him. In future the stores will be purchased by the Honorary Correspondents on the spot, where practicable, under conditions suggested by the Board, and thus delays will be prevented.

Nearly all the Honorary Correspondents keep records of the stores distributed, and their returns are examined periodically. The stores are inspected also from time to time by Mr. Green, the Inspector of Stations, and occasionally by Mr. Thomas, the Guardian of Aborigines, who, notwithstanding his great age, is still as anxious for the welfare of the Aborigines as when, some twenty-five years ago, he was first appointed to watch over them.

CORANDERRK.

The condition of the Coranderrk station is eminently satisfactory. Mr. John Green continues to give nearly his whole attention to the management of the Aborigines at this place; and the progress made in education, and the amount of labor performed on the farm, are truly astonishing, and reflect the highest credit on Mr. Green.

On the 25th February, 1865, Mr. Green reported that two marriages had been solemnised at Coranderrk, and that nearly one hundred blacks and forty whites were present at the ceremony. The conduct of the blacks was good; and it was apparent that they understood the nature and importance of the proceedings. The names of the persons who were married are—William Barak, of the Yarra Yarra tribe, to Annie, of the Lower Murray tribe; and Peter Werry, of the Avoca tribe, to Eliza, of Kilmore.

Mr. Green insists on the proper performance of the marriage ceremony, and it is believed that the effect on the minds of the blacks is highly beneficial. They are made to understand that they are no longer mere savages, and that they are entitled to take part in those ceremonials which the blacks in other parts of the colony believe are reserved only for the whites.

On the 22nd June, 1865, two members of the Central Board—Mr. John Mackenzie and Mr. Brough Smyth—visited this station. They arrived, they believe, unexpectedly, and found the station in its ordinary condition. They inspected the huts and houses at 9 a.m., and found them clean, neatly swept, and very comfortable. Many of the interiors were tolerably well furnished, the seats and tables being made of rough bush timber, and the walls decorated with pictures cut out of the *Illustrated London News* and the illustrated papers published in Melbourne. There were also several photographs, which were highly prized by the Aborigines. There were 105 blacks on the station at that time, and there was scarcely one of them who was not in robust health. Wonga, a very intelligent Aboriginal, showed them some opossum skins which he had tanned with the bark of the native trees, and he showed that he was fully competent to discriminate the barks, and to select the best.

The male blacks were engaged during the day in cutting down trees, clearing the land, and fencing; and the females were properly employed in their huts at home. Mr. Green brought in two little children, who were told to read to them. They had a child's book given to them, and both of them read, simply and clearly, the lessons which were pointed out. The Board received the report of Mr. Mackenzie and Mr. Brough Smyth with much satisfaction, and, in accordance with their recommendations, they selected and appointed a competent female teacher to superintend the education of the girls in reading, writing, sewing, cooking, and in the preparation of farm produce; and they have engaged, also, a farm laborer, who will assist Mr.

Green in cultivating the land, and who will teach and guide the blacks who are engaged in farming.

The Central Board approved, at the same time, of the suggestion that a medical gentleman should visit the station at least four times a year, and report to the Board on the sanitary condition of it.

On the 14th July, 1865, the Central Board received a general report from Mr. Green, extracts from which will be read with interest. He says :—

“A few of the adult males and females have made considerable progress in reading and writing. Fourteen males and four females can read in the second book of lessons, and write a fair round-hand. A few of the others are reading in the first book of lessons, and all show a desire to learn.

“Five boys and five girls are reading in the third book of lessons, and they write a fair round-hand; they can also do easy sums in addition, subtraction, and multiplication. Three boys and three girls are reading in the second book of lessons, and one of them can write a good round-hand; the others are learning to write. Two girls and three boys are reading in the first book of lessons, and they are learning to form letters on the slate. Three girls and four boys only know the letters, and are learning to read easy words in the first book. The whole of the above seem anxious to learn, and I consider that it is as easy to teach them as to teach Europeans.

“There are over seventeen acres of land fenced in, and the greater part has been put under cultivation, namely, nine acres of wheat, two acres of oats, three acres of potatoes, and one acre of cabbages, carrots, onions, &c. Of all these there was a fair crop, except the wheat, two acres of which were destroyed by the floods, and the rest by the rust. It was scarcely worth reaping; and I think, when it is thrashed, there will not be more than fifteen bushels. The oats have not been thrashed. There were about twelve tons of potatoes, about one-half of which have been consumed by the blacks; the rest are on hand. The cabbages, &c., were consumed by the blacks on the station.

“There is a paddock of over thirty acres, which is now being fenced in and cleared for cultivation. About twelve acres of it are already grubbed, and the fence is more than half round it. During the summer they enclosed a grass paddock of more than 500 acres. Altogether there have been over two miles of fencing made and put up during this year, and about fifteen acres have been grubbed, but not yet cleared of trees. Much more would have been done if we had had more bullocks and more tools.

“The cattle have not done well during the past year. Three bullocks, five cows, and one calf died, and two calves were drowned. The bullocks and cows died of old age. One steer was killed for meat. A few of the bullocks and cows are now in a very weak state, and are not likely to live through the winter. The rest are all good, young, healthy cattle.

“The following is a list of the cattle on the station :—

Eight young, and three old bullocks	...	...	...	11
Five three-year old, and five two-year old steers	...	...	...	10
Cows with calves at foot, and heifers	...	...	...	18
Five three-year old, and ten two-year old heifers	15
Calves rising one year old	20
One mare and foal	2

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“Seven of the cows are now giving milk, and from seven to thirteen have been milked all the year. The milk, for the most part, is consumed by the children in the house at present; but in the summer there was plenty for all on the station. A quantity of butter was made also in the summer months, which was consumed by the children and the old infirm people.

“There have been six huts built during the year, four of them are for the blacks, one is used as a kitchen, where the cooking for the children who live in the house is done, and the other is used as a stable. There are now fifteen good substantial huts, eleven of which are regularly inhabited, two by the single men, and nine by the married couples. The hut belonging to Bobby (who left for Gipps Land) is empty.

“The value of the huts is about £400.

“The last supplies of stores are nearly consumed. Those on hand are in good condition. I serve them out to all on the station regularly twice a week, namely, on Tuesday and Saturday in each week. The working men get—sugar, 1½ lbs.; tea, 3 oz.; flour, 5 lbs.; tobacco, 1 fig every week. The rest get less. All get a little meat occasionally—a little over 100 lbs. a-week to all. The old men generally hunt every fine day, but the young men hunt only two days in the week. They work on the other four days. They make rugs with the skins of the opossum, kangaroo, and wallaby, for each of which they get from £1 to £1 15s. With the moneys thus obtained they buy boots, hats, and clothes, powder and shot, and occasionally meat. Tommy Hobson has bought a good mare, and a saddle and bridle. A few years ago I could not prevent him from spending all his money in drink; but now he has always money on hand, and he keeps himself, his wife, and three children always well clothed.

“There are thirty able working men and five lads on the station. When at work they are divided into four companies—one party makes posts and rails ; two bring them with the bullocks to the line of fence, and lay them down, and another party puts up the fence ; the rest grub and clear the ground. **All go to work regularly.** The greater number of them are anxious to make the station self-supporting. The greater number of the women keep their huts, themselves, and the clothes of their husbands very clean. In their spare time they make baskets for sale, and with the money they get for these they buy little things for their huts.

“Fifteen boys and eleven girls live with me in the schoolhouse, apart from the rest of the blacks. The eldest of the boys have to do some work every day before and after school hours ; they get in the cows evening and morning for milking, they get firewood and water, and they sometimes do a little work in the garden. The girls have to cook, wash, clean the house, and make their own and the boys’ clothes. **Some of the girls are fair house servants.** There are ten children living with their parents ; two or three of them come to school occasionally, but they are yet too young to learn much.

“I have no doubt all the children will become useful members of society if properly managed.

“The health of the blacks, on the whole, has been very good. There have been only a few cases of sickness during the year, and two deaths. One man died here, and a girl in the Melbourne Hospital. They were both sick before they came here. The forty blacks who came here with me from the Acheron have increased three in number since that time. I have not the least doubt that those who settle will not die off, as happens when they roam about.

“There are 104 blacks here. They are from six different parts of the colony ; and there have been only a few cases of drunkenness since they came. **They all agree very well.** When any strife arises it is settled in a kind of court, held in the schoolroom, at which I preside.”

[Mr. Green here gives very interesting extracts from his diary relative to the daily pursuits of the Aborigines, &c.]

“In conclusion, I beg to say, that I have no doubt the whole (and more, if brought) of the blacks here will become a very interesting, social, and industrious community, if rightly managed. A man can lead them easily, but a hundred men could not drive them to do well.”

Mr. Green states that when he is fully supplied with implements, stock, and seed, the station will be self-supporting.

The average cost per man per annum during the past year, as compared with other stations, was not high.

The medical officer appointed to visit and report on the condition of this station has furnished the following information.

Under date 9th August, 1865, he says :—

“I visited the station on 5th July ; and, considering the short time it has been in operation, it is in a most satisfactory condition. There were ninety-nine Aborigines on the station, consisting of families, single men, and children. With the exception of three adults, they were all in good health. One of the three is suffering from chronic inflammation of the orbit, the eyeball having been rudely destroyed in infancy ; another is suffering from acute bronchitis ; and the third from that very intractable skin disease, psoriasis. For these I prescribed, and, with the care of the superintendent, I have every confidence in a favorable result. The children are in buoyant spirits, robust and active, and well advanced in education for such a class. They have their meals in the schoolroom, which, from its size, is well suited to the purpose. Their dormitories, including beds and bedding, are very comfortable. The families, and indeed all on the station, have a very satisfactory degree of comfort ; and some of those who have been longest there exhibited order and cleanliness which quite surprised me, showing what can be done for this unfortunate race. I examined the stores, which consisted of tea, sugar, flour, salt beef, and potatoes ; all were good and sound. The potatoes were grown on the station. I examined, also, the medicine chest ; it contains a good supply of all the ordinary medicines. In view of the whole of the arrangements, and the very intractable habits of the race, I consider the station is in a very satisfactory state for the time it has been in operation.”

Under date 18th January, 1866, he says :—

“I visited the aboriginal station at Coranderrk on the 4th October last. There were eighty Aborigines on the station—their number having been reduced since my previous visit on account of the shearing season, several having gone (under permission) to shear.

“I have further to report the highly satisfactory state of health on the station, as there is not a single case of sickness. The children are clean and cheerful ; and the adult portion of the community have the same healthy, contented appearance. Their huts are clean, and many of them are very comfortable. I also inspected the stores, and found them good and sound. The order and general management of the station reflect much credit on the tact and industry of the superintendent.”

Many persons who take an interest in the welfare of the Aborigines have, from time to time, visited this station ; and, as far as the results of their observations are known to the Board, they corroborate the statements of their officers.

The Central Board have made an experiment, with the knowledge that all previous experiments of a similar kind have failed ; but they have reason to believe that the system they have adopted is a good one, and that, if it continue to be successful, it will benefit not only the Aborigines of this colony, but the whole of the aboriginal population in Australia. It will be followed, it is to be hoped, in New South Wales, where the blacks are in a very bad condition.

LAKE HINDMARSH.

The average number of blacks who attended the Lake Hindmarsh station during the year was thirty-seven, but more than one hundred visit the place occasionally and get help if necessary. The wants of the aged, the sick, and the infirm are supplied, and medical aid is given when required.

On the 12th July, 1865, the Reverend Mr. Speiseke stated, in a report furnished to the Central Board, that, amongst the adults, five males and six females could read pretty well ; two boys and one girl were also able to read ; and fifteen blacks were more or less advanced in spelling-books. He forwarded specimens of writing, which are not inferior to those commonly exhibited in schools.

Touching the present condition of the station, he says :—

“The whole of the reserve is fenced in, chiefly with good heavy brush fence, and is divided again into three paddocks for depasturing sheep. About fifteen acres are fenced off for horses, cows, and oxen, and about three acres are set apart for growing hay for the horses. Two small paddocks are used as kitchen or vegetable gardens ; one—the oldest—belongs to the missionaries, but out of it the blacks are freely supplied when there is any produce ; and the other is the property of Nathaniel and Matthew, and they are now cultivating it under our care and direction.

“As I stated in my report last year, the land, and especially the climate, are not favorable to cultivation, and we could not reckon upon a crop of wheat or potatoes ; we get a few vegetables only with great care and trouble. We have, however, made a beginning, and I hope—and should like to see—more gardens cultivated by the blacks.

“The number of finished buildings and houses for the use of the blacks has not, I am sorry to say, increased since the date of my last report. There are four finished log-houses, and a building containing three rooms, used as a schoolroom and as a lodging for the young men and boys. One room of our own house is set apart for the few young girls in the tribe, and is at present occupied by two. We have in hand the erection of a large house, containing four rooms, which will be finished in about a month. It would have been completed some time ago, but our horses are in a poor state, and are not able to draw the timber required for the building as quickly as we could wish. The above-mentioned buildings are constructed of logs made of heavy posts of the gum tree, with pine logs laid horizontally, and I venture to say that they are as good, if not, a few of them, better than those commonly built in the same way. With the exception of the schoolhouse they are covered with bark, and have windows, and they are all floored but one. Some of the flooring boards have been sawn by the natives themselves. The total number of buildings is twelve, including church, mission-house, kitchen, store, cart-shed, schoolhouse, four houses for the blacks, one in course of erection, and fowl-house. The mission-house is built of limestone, and covered with bark. Limestone is plentiful here, and I shall cause the houses of the blacks to be built of this material in future, if possible. The buildings for the blacks are occupied now by twenty people ; and they have been up to this time permanently occupied, and seldom by a smaller number. The number has been as low as fifteen. Upon the whole, they are well kept and clean ; some are remarkably so, and I have never seen, in Australia, this sort of houses cleaner or more comfortable. Two of their houses are scrubbed every Saturday. Some keep their houses clean of their own accord, and some need looking after. Friday or Saturday is their washing day.

“The stores provided by the Board are, in my opinion, good and suitable. The darker color of the woollen shirt is better than the lighter yellow color supplied last year. I think it would be more profitable if plain gingham was provided instead of print for women's dresses. The rations, flour, sugar, tea, and tobacco, are given out daily in the evening. Few of them get weekly rations. Blankets, clothing, &c., are distributed when necessary.

"Of late the blacks have began to make coverings for their heads, and I send by post a specimen; they are cut and sewn by the men. Coverings for the feet they are not able to make, and in my opinion never will be, and a few pairs of boots would be extremely welcome. Several of the women can sew dresses when cut out for them; for this reason I have asked for more print and but for a few made dresses for the old.

"At periods they hunt pretty regularly. They have done so more than usual this season, in order to get skins to make opossum rugs.

"I am happy to be able to say that, for the last two or three years, there has been no drunkenness amongst them, in or near the station, and it is within my knowledge that those who have settled never indulge in intoxicating liquors.

"There are at this time 788 sheep on the station, originally given by our neighbours, and seven horses, two of which belong to the blacks. Five horses were bought and provided by the mission, but the blacks have the use of them for fetching their fuel and drawing timber for building, &c. We have four working oxen, four milch cows, and six calves. At present we get very little milk, in consequence of the scarcity of grass. Last year nearly all the people on the station were provided with milk and butter, but now none get milk. During the past year we have killed about 125 sheep; and those living in the houses get their meals regularly every day.

"As regards the temporal concerns of the station, it is in a prosperous condition; only I regret to say that, although those residing continually here enjoy fair health, and though there have been few deaths during the last two or three years, there is no increase in the number of blacks." * * * * *

Mr. Green, the Inspector, visited this station in November, 1864, and his report is highly favorable. He represented the condition of the station as very cheering, and he noticed with satisfaction the decent and orderly manner in which the huts were kept by the resident blacks. He is of opinion that it is unwise to distribute much clothing. The natives should be encouraged to hunt and to make rugs, for which, it appears, they find a ready sale at high prices. With the proceeds they could buy clothes and other things, as they do at Coranderrk. Mr. Ellerman, one of the Honorary Correspondents, has offered to send their rugs to Melbourne for sale, or to buy them.

It is probable that, if opportunity served, they could be easily taught to make shoes and boots. They are very ingenious, and much of the work they do for their own purposes requires greater manual skill and more effort than are needed for the making of clothes, or shoes, or hats.

The Reverend Mr. Speiseke is, however, in an unfavorable situation; he has no one to assist him in teaching trades, and it is indeed surprising that he should have done so much useful work, and brought so many natives to live regularly and decently, and to conform to the habits of civilization.

One of his pupils—Daniel—lately left Lake Hindmarsh in order to proceed to the interior of Australia with some of the Moravian missionaries. This speaks well for the character of the blacks, and deserves to be recorded; for it is not commonly believed that the Australian black can be taught to care for the welfare of others, or to make sacrifices, which, in this case, are greater than a European, unacquainted with the natives, can appreciate.

YELTA AND THE LOWER MURRAY.

The average number of Aborigines who attended the Yelta station during the past year was fourteen. In June, the average for the month was five, and for days together there was only one black on the station. About 128 Aborigines visit the place from time to time, and of this number, as appears from the returns, there are seventy-one men, forty-three women, eleven boys, two girls, and one half-caste.

The Reverend Mr. Goodwin, in a report dated 19th July, 1865, says:—

"I have invariably found that the adults dislike the drudgery of learning to read and write, and, after a few short lessons, become wearied of it and relinquish the attempt, and for these we have to be content with oral instruction.

"The number of adults who have, when children, received instruction, here, and are, or rather were, able to read and write, is seven males and eight females. The women have, with one exception, been removed from the station by marriage, and the little they had learnt has been soon forgotten, and nearly all the young men have sought employment at the various stations

as stock-riders, &c., or at the township, and consequently, if they have not forgotten, have not progressed in reading, &c. Two only have persevered so as to be able to read well and write a letter in a very creditable manner, and more than once they have been employed by white men to write letters for them. When questioned upon what they have read, they generally give very satisfactory replies, showing that they have understood what they read. One, Mickey, has been absent from here for several months, being employed at a station forty miles distant; the other, Fred. Wowinda, has remained very constantly with us, and I have good hope that the instruction he has received will bring forth fruit. I was much pleased, when entering his hut a short time ago, to find him employed reading the Testament to a black from a neighboring station.

"There are few children of an age to receive instruction, being, with the exception of five, but mere infants. Those on our school-book now are three males and two females, between the ages of six and eleven years. One boy and a girl can read and write tolerably well for their age; the others are just commencing to read small words. At present all are away with the adults at the lambing stations. We have no power to compel them to remain.

"The climate is quite adverse to cultivation without the means of irrigating, which—as the water has to be pumped up from twenty to thirty feet, according to the height of the flood—can only be carried out on a very limited scale. I have, at much labor and cost to myself, erected a windmill and pumps for irrigating the mission garden, a portion of which was set apart for the use of any of the Aborigines who were willing to cultivate; but I regret to say that, after two years, all, with the exception of Fred. Wowinda, grew wearied of the labor and gave up their plots; and as I found that they disposed of their produce (melons, &c.) chiefly for drink, it was necessary for me to restrict the ground to those only who would make good use of it.

"This station has no stock for the use of the Aborigines, our one-mile section barely sufficing for the necessary horses, a milch cow or two, and sheep sufficient only to supply the missionaries with meat.

"There are four huts built principally by and for the adults (another was commenced, but not completed), and one hut built for the children, now occupied by Fred. Wowinda. The adults' huts are only occasionally inhabited; they are kept tolerably clean; but strict supervision is required to keep them so. The other buildings on the station are the schoolroom, store, and two cottages for the missionaries, with the necessary out-buildings.

"A monthly return of stores being sent regularly from this station, it is unnecessary for me to touch upon this subject. The blacks regularly receive a daily ration when they are at the station, at the rate of 10 lbs. flour, 2 lbs. sugar, and tea and tobacco in proportion. The able-bodied are required to do some little work, such as getting firewood, &c., but are rarely occupied for more than an hour or two. When employed all day they get meat in addition.

"They hunt kangaroos and emus with dogs, which are mostly a mongrel breed of the kangaroo and other dogs. They shoot and net ducks, &c., and catch fish, both with net and line. Some are thus employed more constantly than others, but all occasionally.

"The desire for intoxicating drink has greatly increased among them—men and women alike—and this vice is much encouraged by evil white men, who frequent their camps at night for the sake of the women; and as there is now no law in New South Wales to punish those who supply them with drink, they generally encamp on that side of the river near to the township and roadside inns, where they can obtain drink openly; and consequently nearly all their earnings are spent in drink, which is taken to the camp, and frequent quarrels and fights are the result. Their one desire is now to obtain money, in order that they may procure drink. I have petitions in reference to the sale of liquors to them to the two Houses of Legislature in Sydney in course of signature, which will be forwarded when Parliament meets again.

"For the names and number of the Aborigines in the district extending from Chalka Creek to the boundary of South Australia, I beg to refer you to our last monthly return."

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The condition of the blacks in this part of the colony is not satisfactory, and it is apparent from the statements in Mr. Goodwin's report that it is not likely to improve. The Central Board have not yet been able to make arrangements for the better management of the Aborigines at this place; but as soon as practicable a suitable site will be selected, and an endeavor made to found an establishment on the plan of that at the Upper Yarra. It is unreasonable to suppose that the best specimens of the aboriginal race in Victoria should be more difficult to manage and educate than those assembled at Coranderrk under the care of Mr. Green; and the Central Board look with confidence to the future, and entertain the hope that, under a good system, and with efficient teachers, the blacks of the Lower Murray will soon be brought under control, and induced to labor and to live decently. An earnest, able, intelligent instructor will find a new field in this part of Victoria.

LAKE TYERS.

A great number of blacks continue to apply to Mr. Bulmer for food and clothing. About thirty blacks are almost always encamped near Lake Tyers, and at certain seasons the members of all the tribes in this part of Gipps Land assemble at the station.

Mr. Bulmer reports as follows:—

“The number of adults who are able to read and write are only two, namely, J. Barlow or Karran, and Billy McDougal. These only have applied themselves to their lessons. Many began, but they soon got tired. I enclose specimens of the writing. As regards reading, they are slower in learning that than in learning writing. They soon acquire the art of writing. There is only one girl who is able to write and read a little; her name is Mary; native name, Ablemangy. She has not applied herself to her lessons as we would have wished. She always goes away with her parents, and sometimes she is away for six months at a time, so that when she returns she has to commence afresh. I find the wandering habits of the blacks a great hindrance to their acquiring knowledge. They will come to be taught for a month or so, and make tolerable progress, when something will arise to disturb their peace—the rumour of a fight, or the elopement of some gin, or something still less important—and they will disperse, to assemble at some distant spot where they can have satisfaction in a general fight. My black, Karran, never goes to the township to post letters without bringing back news of a fight. But for the fights, I think many of the young men would settle down and learn steadily.

“As to the quantity of land fenced in, I have only about an acre at present. Karran is busy fencing in a piece for himself—about half an acre. He is the only black who has any idea of doing anything for himself. Last year he raised half a ton of potatoes, and this year he is determined to double the quantity. I set the young men to clear a piece of ground for potatoes and to fence it. They were busy with it, when they were called away to one of their fights. Since then they have not returned; but when they come back I will get them to dig the ground and plant it with potatoes. Last year I raised about two tons of potatoes with the assistance of one young man, Billy McDougal, and four hundredweight of these I exchanged for sugar, as we were at that time out of that article. The rest have been consumed by the blacks and my family. I have not grown any wheat or oats yet.

“I have eight dairy cows on the station and eleven young heifers. Only two are in milk. I have not slaughtered any cattle on the station. There are eight pigs, and I killed one in May. Many of the blacks who are engaged on stations as stock-riders possess a few cows; and some of them have talked of bringing their stock to the station, but they have not yet done so.

“There is only one hut on the station devoted to the uses of the blacks. As a rule, the young men prefer living in their camps. They prefer to camp near an old log, so that they can have a fire without much effort; and during the late rains even, I could not induce them to occupy the hut. They said it was far away from firewood. Karran sometimes occupies the hut when he is by himself, and he keeps it tolerably clean, but when others join him it gets filthy. One will not clean it because another will not assist—that is their excuse—but the real cause is indolence. A great many of the young men who have been engaged as stock-riders come here for what they call a ‘spell.’ This really means eating and sleeping; and they are useless unless on horseback. These half-civilized men are much worse to deal with than those who have not had so much intercourse with white men.

“I have tried to get some of the people to build huts, but hitherto they have not done so.

“With regard to the stores furnished by the Board, I may say that they are very good in quality. In distributing them, I make it a condition that work shall be done by those who receive them, except as regards the aged and sick. To these I issue rations daily, the same as to the workers. There is a great number of old people here who could not work, and of course I feed them. The quantities I issue daily to each person are—1½ lb. flour, ½ lb. sugar, and 1oz. of tea. These are given daily to those on the station. I find great difficulty in persuading them to work for what they get. They have an idea that I have no right to ask them to do anything in return for the food I issue; and many of them have gone away from the station because they could not get food and remain idle.

“The blacks do not make any coverings for the head or feet, though, were they so inclined, they have ample materials in the skins of the wild animals they kill. They generally manage to get shoes and hats in their travels, so that they care not to manufacture them. Besides, they like to imitate ‘white fellows’ in everything; and when they have a few shillings they buy themselves hats and shoes. The tribes in Gipps Land, generally, are very little inclined to help themselves in any way. I find a great difference between them and the Murray tribes. The latter are much more inclined to make things for their own comfort than these blacks are. I have seen them making nets for fishing, and for hunting the emu; and not only would they make the net, but they would manufacture the cord. Scarcely any of the Gipps Land blacks know how to make a net, even if they were supplied with the twine.

“The blacks still hunt, and thus procure animal food, which is not supplied to them at the station. They fish in the lakes, and also hunt kangaroos and native bears—the only way they have of procuring meat.

"They still indulge in intoxicating liquors when they can get them, but I am happy to say that the inspector of police has been very zealous in his efforts to prevent the publicans supplying drink to the blacks in the township of Bairnsdale. Cases of drunkenness do not fall under my own observation, as I am living far away from any township. I believe, if they do get drunk, it is in some secret way, through the agency of white men, though, on the whole, I think there is an improvement in this district, owing to the exertions of the gentleman above referred to.

"The number of blacks at present at the station is thirty—four young men, five children, and twenty-one married people. I have had as many as eighty here lately, but most of them soon went away, as this is the season during which they get employment in cutting bark for the settlers.

"I may say, that the condition of the blacks in this district is satisfactory. There are not many cases of sickness. Those who have required medical aid have been promptly attended to by Dr. Morrison. I have already reported all the cases of death at the station. The last was from pure old age. There is only one feeble person at the station, a very old woman, who seems to be near death. All the rest seem to be healthy and strong.

"As to the progress of the station, I think I have persuaded the young men that it is necessary to cultivate the soil. I will try to get them to grow potatoes at least, but other produce I do not think they can manage at present. The ground about the station is thickly timbered, so that there is some hard work to be done before the land is brought under cultivation. I will get them to do it gradually. When nothing occurs to distract their attention they work very well; and if we could only get them to live at peace with each other they would settle. * * * * * I give lessons daily to those who desire them, and generally I spend my evenings with them, teaching them singing, and explaining some passage of scripture. They seem always to enjoy themselves, and pay great attention to all that is said to them."

Mr. Bulmer continues to labor with zeal, and though he has many difficulties to contend with, there is reason to hope that ere long his exertions will be appreciated by the Aborigines. They will come to look upon him as their protector, and day by day his influence over them will increase. His plain, unvarnished statement affords food for reflection.

LAKE WELLINGTON.

The Reverend Mr. Hagenauer's zealous labors at Lake Wellington have not been unattended with good results. He has charge of 196 blacks belonging to the following tribes:—Tarra-warra-ka, Woollam-ba-bellumbellum, Moona-ba-Ngatgrang, Noora-warango-ba-koorang-yong, and Doora-wreko-ba-daan; and the average daily attendance during the year was forty-two. He reports as follows:—

"I feel most happy to report a considerable progress in many important points.

"In my last year's report I mentioned that eighteen young men and children had occasionally attended school, and that two of them had begun to read well. One of the two, I am sorry to say, is dead; the other one reads very well, and writes a good hand. Four of the other young men have since begun to read and write, and there is also one adult female who can read and write. There are also three female and two male children who have made good progress in reading and writing. There is a singing class established, and they show some talent for music. In addition to the ordinary school hours, the female children attend a sewing class, and they are making satisfactory progress. The want of means for the erection of a large schoolhouse has prevented me hitherto from doing more in the way of education, but I hope to be in a position very soon to carry out the plan of the new building. It gives me great satisfaction to report that the school is now entirely under the care of the Reverend J. Kramer, who has met with encouragement since he took charge of it, some seven months ago. His experience as a teacher in a college in Germany enables him to do much with his scholars in school, as well as in directing their amusements.

"As to the land fenced in, I have the honor to state that there are several small paddocks very well fenced—together embracing an area of about fifteen acres—but a good deal of the land is now under water. There is only one small paddock of about three acres suitable for growing potatoes; and we had about five tons last season, which have all been consumed on the station. None of the produce has been sold. For other purposes this land, as mentioned in my first application, and also in my last year's report, is not fit; it is heavily timbered, and too poor to grow wheat or oats. There are only small spots fit for gardens. I have planted a great many fruit trees and vegetables both during this season and last, and the vegetable produce has been a great help.

"There is no stock on the station as yet, with the exception of a few horses and two cows, which are lent for use. As soon as I am able to raise a small sum of money I think I shall

invest it in sheep, in order to get the needful supply of meat for the station. The sum taken from my capital for buildings, fencing, carting, &c., was so large that I could not buy any stock. A considerable number of sheep have been killed during the past year, and also a great quantity of meat bought, which I had to buy either at the stations or from the butchers at Stratford. Not one of the blacks has been rich enough to buy stock for himself, but I trust some of them will be able to do so ere long.

"Since the date of the last report two new houses and one small hut have been built for the blacks, and also a large place made of bark, which is at present used as a schoolroom. There are now eight buildings on the station, as follow:—1. One large weatherboard mission-house, of seven rooms; 2. The store-house, with the addition of a room for the sick; 3. The school room; 4. A cart-shed; 5. A two-room house, 25 feet by 12 feet, and 8 feet high, with a verandah; this is inhabited by four young men; 6. A two-room house, 24 feet by 12 feet, with a verandah, built of wattle and daub; this is inhabited by a family with one child; 7. A two-room house, 20 feet by 12 feet, inhabited by one family with one child; 8. One small hut, inhabited by one family with one child. These are always occupied, and generally kept clean. Two other dwelling-houses will be built soon; and if I had means at my disposal for the payment of materials and cartage, there is no doubt that I might erect three or four houses with advantage to families now on the station. I am glad to say that I am just now getting the materials from Melbourne for the erection of a large school house and chapel, which will soon be commenced.

"As to the mode of distributing stores—I give them out daily in small quantities. All the stores are of the right quality; but during the last five months I have had to supplement the supply myself to a great extent, and also to buy and collect by private means a great deal for clothes and household utensils.

"The blacks here hunt native game regularly, and also catch fish during the summer season.

"I am sorry to say that there are still cases of drunkenness, and I have not been able to prevent it altogether, although I believe it is a great deal less frequent than formerly.

"Generally, I believe there has been some improvement in the conditions of life among the blacks here."

GEELONG.

Mr. John Garratt reports as follows:—

"The actual number of Aborigines belonging to the Geelong tribe is only five (5), viz.:—Jerry (king), Timboo, Jemmy, Harry, and Eliza.

"The latter is now, and has for some time past been in Gipps Land.

"Although the number is so small it is quite a general thing for a large number of blacks from Colac to visit Geelong during the summer months, to whom it is necessary to distribute clothing and rations.

"I regret to have to report that the thirst for intoxicating drinks is as great as ever, and the miserable remnant of a once powerful tribe is fast drinking itself to the grave.

"The practice of selling clothing for drink is still common notwithstanding all our efforts to prevent it, and there really seem but scanty hopes of doing any permanent good to those poor unfortunates.

"It will be remembered by the Board that on the death of the aboriginal female, Ellen, some months since, I caused summonses to issue against three notorious publicans, who had been constantly in the habit of supplying the blacks with drink, and I am happy to report that the result of such cases (reported to the Board at the time) has had a very salutary effect on the trade.

"I trust that my efforts to ameliorate in some degree the condition of the blacks in this district may meet the approval of the Board."

BACCHUS MARSH.

Respecting the condition of the blacks who visit Bacchus Marsh, Mr. Young says:—

"I have to inform you that in April, 1864, I distributed blankets to twenty-one Aborigines. In May and July, 1865, I have distributed blankets and rations to eleven Aborigines, six males and five females. * * * * *

"This year I have received in stores only 15 lbs. of tobacco, and I have still a supply of flour, tea, sugar, tobacco, and blankets.

"None of the Aborigines have been brought up to the police office this year for drunkenness, and I have noticed only one or two cases of insobriety among them. Their general health seems good, and they are in very good spirits, and satisfied with the rations provided for them. They have assisted this year in digging potatoes, and have been paid in cash and butchers' meat; the latter, they often remind me, should be furnished by the Board, and I certainly think a little of it would, be of great service to them."

CARNGHAM.

Mr. Andrew Porteous, the Honorary Correspondent of the Board at Carngham, has made the following report respecting the condition of the Aborigines under his care:—

“The Mount Emu tribe of Aborigines are pretty comfortable, and seem well contented with the provisions and clothing supplied by the Central Board; yet they cannot be induced to remain for any length of time in one place. Although supplied with sufficient provisions, they prefer roaming about from place to place, depending on charities, and when hard pressed they return for a supply from the Board’s stores.

“The tribe generally roam about in small bands of from ten to twelve individuals. This may be accounted for from the tribe being composed of the remnant of four tribes, viz., Mount Emu, Mount Cole, Ballarat, and Wandyallock tribes. They occasionally meet all together, but it is their custom for each tribe to travel by itself. When supplying clothing to the tribe, I have always made it a rule to brand every article, and I have not known or heard of any of the tribe selling their branded clothing. In supplying the blankets I have always supplied each aboriginal with a single blanket at one time. * * * * I think everything supplied should be branded, or half of the articles will be bartered away for a trifle. In supplying rations, when the tribe is settled at this place, I give each of them about 4lbs. of flour twice a week, and 2lbs. of sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. tea, twice a week. When the tribe is leaving this place, I give each about 10 lbs. flour, 3 lbs. sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. tea, also two figs of tobacco. The tribe still continue to make opossum rugs, and, if steady, might make a good living by it, as they generally get 20s. to 30s. for each rug, which they can make in about fourteen days.* The women also employ themselves in making baskets and nets, which they sell to the Europeans. A few of the young men are generally employed on stations, and receive a small remuneration; but I regret much to have to report that all they receive, both for labor and opossum rugs, is spent on intoxicating liquors, and I fear that they will not leave off this evil habit unless prohibited from visiting the gold fields, and are allowed to settle on some portion of land where they would take an interest in improving it.

“A number of the tribe have requested me to apply to the Government to reserve a block of land near Chepstowe for their use, where they might make a paddock, and grow wheat and potatoes, and erect permanent residences. I believe most of the tribe would remain permanently there if the land was reserved for their use; their hunting is in the neighborhood, and there is plenty of water. The young men of the tribe seem to be very anxious about it; I believe this has arisen from hearing of the comfort and happiness of the Aborigines at Coranderrk. I think the Board might take this matter seriously into consideration, as it would add considerably to the happiness of the Aborigines, and it would be little or nothing for the Government to reserve two sections for a year or two while the tribe lasted. A few more years will see them extinct. The Board will recollect that in the early part of the present year seven youths were sent from this tribe to the Board’s establishment at Coranderrk. They left Carngham at three o’clock a.m., in a spring cart, to get the first train from Ballarat; and by nine o’clock the same morning, the parents of four of the youths took the road and followed their children, and by slow but continued marches found Coranderrk, and their children comfortable and happy under the care of Mr. Green. The parents remained at Coranderrk for upwards of four months, and then returned to inform the tribe of the comfort and happiness they had witnessed in the blackfellows’ township, as they called it. On hearing their story, which was very interesting, the king made up his mind to take the whole tribe, and go to see the blackfellows’ township; and I have been informed that the Hopkins tribe intend to join them, and proceed to Coranderrk. Should they carry this into execution, and see the comforts they have at Coranderrk, I think Mr. Green might persuade them to leave all the youths of this tribe to be instructed; and should the aged of the tribe prefer to return to their own localities, I think the Board should endeavor to have a block of land reserved for their use, that they might be enabled to imitate the industry they had seen at Coranderrk.”

MOUNT SHADWELL.

The following report on the condition of the Aborigines at Mount Shadwell has been furnished by Mr. Robert Burke:—

“The blacks, I regret to say, are not improving in condition, either physically or morally; many of them are suffering from pulmonary complaints, brought on, I think, by the change in their mode of life. Sometimes they wear clothing, and sometimes they throw it off entirely.

The blacks still indulge in the use of intoxicating liquors whenever they can get them. It is almost impossible to prevent their getting spirits, but I have endeavored to lessen the temptation by preventing them from camping in the township at night; the police also have done their best to prevent them from frequenting the public-houses.

* When I was travelling through the Western District, in November, I found several Aborigines employed in procuring opossum skins for exportation, for which they were well paid by the whites. R. B. S.

"About twelve young men in the tribe are engaged in industrial pursuits. They are engaged as stock-riders and bullock-drivers; one family also is engaged in shepherding, and gives satisfaction.

"The natives have almost abandoned hunting native game and fishing; they depend upon the settlers and the Government for their supplies of food.

"In distributing the stores I have endeavored as much as possible to confine the issue to the families, leaving the young men to work for their livelihood. I am sorry to have to state that I consider the natives of this tribe are declining fast, and that, unless some unexpected change takes place, the tribe will be extinct in a few years. The deaths are more numerous than the births: intoxicating liquors, and those diseases incident to a life of dissipation, have done their work amongst them. The men are generally feeble, and the women are mostly barren.

"I beg to state also that I consider the supplies afforded to the natives considerably mitigate their sufferings. They have lost all taste for hunting and fishing, and were it not for the Government bounty they would be very wretched, more particularly in the winter season.

"The blacks, I am glad to say, are grateful for the aid extended to them, and have upon several occasions desired me to express their thanks to the Government."

BUANGOR.

Mr. Colin Campbell, the Honorary Correspondent at Buangor, has furnished the following report:—

"With regard to the Aborigines in this locality, I have to state that there are not more than ten or twelve who are in the habit of coming here for a day or two at a time. They have received from me twelve blankets out of last year's supply and four out of this year's, with seven or eight weeks' rations.

"Their condition is the same as it has been for many years back—with the ideas of civilization, but without the motives or habits of industry. When they have money they indulge in intoxicating liquors, but I have not seen any of them actually drunk for some time past.

"The vicinity of the public-house is a great temptation, and I have already pointed out that the Publicans Act is unavailing, as it only prohibits giving liquor in any quantity which shall *produce* intoxication, with a penalty of only five pounds.

"The giving of liquor, under any circumstances, should, I think, be severely punished. I have seen a man giving a large glass of brandy to a native woman, but I had no means of proving that she was intoxicated.

"In conclusion, I have to state that no special circumstances have come under my observation since I reported the death of Tommy Wills, about two months ago."

FRAMLINGHAM.

A new station has lately been formed near Framlingham, on a reserve of 3,500 acres, having for its eastern boundary the River Hopkins, where it is proposed to gather together, if possible, the Aborigines of the Western District. A station, similar to that at Coranderrk, would be most valuable, if such a one could be formed in this district. The Aborigines would be better cared for; there would be few opportunities for them to get intoxicating liquors, and the cost of maintaining them would be greatly reduced.

The Central Board will carefully watch the experiment which has just been initiated, and they will endeavor to follow as nearly as practicable the plans which they adopted at Coranderrk.

CARR'S PLAINS.

At Carr's Plains there are sixty blacks, who receive assistance from the Honorary Correspondent, Mr. William Dennis. Respecting their condition he writes as follows:—

"The condition of the blacks is yearly becoming more pitiable, and in my opinion their comforts have not increased of late years. * * * * *

"There are only four men resident at my station who are in perfect health, and the women, too, are old and decrepid, with the exception of two.

"My reasons for thinking that the blacks are worse off than formerly are, that the present occupants of the stations do not take as much interest in them as the former proprietors did. * * * * *

"The stores supplied by the Central Board afford great comfort, and without them the weak and old blacks would suffer great hardships.

"I distribute the stores weekly to all, except the strong men. I give 4 lbs. flour, 1 lb. sugar, 2 oz. tea, and a cake of tobacco weekly. The clothing is distributed whenever there is an apparent necessity.

* * * * *

"They hunt whenever there is necessity for their doing so, but not otherwise.

"I have very seldom seen the blacks at my station intoxicated, but I have great reason for believing that they are very fond of drink."

SANDFORD.

There are twenty-two blacks who frequent Sandford Station, which is under the care of Mr. J. H. Jackson.

In reply to inquiries made by the Central Board, he says :—

"As to their general condition I think it is very little improved for the aid supplied to them, except with regard to blankets, which, I think, they would be quite without if the Board did not supply them. They are all very anxious to get clothes, which they soon either destroy or get rid of very quickly. I have generally discouraged the able men from coming to me, giving more to the old men. I am sorry to say that the women are in a very destitute condition; though I have applied several times to the Board for suitable clothing, I have not had any for more than twelve months.* There are six of them that receive rations pretty constantly, with which they are not extravagant, and come whenever they want them, and get 2 lbs. or 3 lbs. of sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of tea, 12 lbs. or 14 lbs. of flour amongst two or three of them. I do not weigh it, but merely give what I think should last a few days; sometimes I have eight or ten men who stay for a week or two at a time. They can always get work on the stations if they choose, but they are very uncertain, from their love of wandering, though when they are allowed to get their food from the men's hut they work well, but white men dislike cooking for them. They are good hands at bush fencing, but seldom earn more than their rations. They are also employed in horse-breaking occasionally, being generally good riders, but from their drunken habits are not to be trusted. Two or three times I have employed them at this, and have been obliged to take the horse myself when only ridden a time or two. Of course, my being so near the township gives them greater facilities of getting drink, which I find they can do whenever they have money. Still it seems difficult to commit the publicans. The blacks will not inform—invariably saying some white fellow gave it to them. The police being well known, they are cunning enough to keep away when they are about.

"They fish a good deal in the season and, when pressed, they hunt a little; they are fond of shooting, and kill plenty of ducks when they can borrow a gun. The old man, Billy, that I have had the doctor to so often, still lingers on. He is in a very bad state from the effects of disease—one of his eyes is gone, and his legs are merely skin and bone, yet, every now and then, he cannot resist going away for a few days. I believe the poor fellow would have been dead long ago only for the attention of his lubra, and being well supplied with blankets and food regularly.

"I am happy to inform you that I have carried out my intention of having the half-caste girl apprenticed to my wife and self, undertaking to teach her the duties of a nurse and seamstress, and to train her up as a Christian. We purpose having her baptized shortly. She is a very good girl, most persevering in learning to read, and never goes to bed without reading a portion of Scripture; she attends Sunday-school, and learns her hymns as well as any child at school, and can repeat the Church Catechism to the end of our duty towards our neighbors. She is rather inclined to be sulky, but on the whole we are much pleased with her. She signed her name to the indenture, Sarah Sandford, though she has never been taught writing beyond some half-dozen lessons. She also assists to make her own clothes. In concluding this I will again ask you to forward me some warm dress for Billy's lubra and the little girl Sarah. Something in the style of a dressing-gown, which, I think, would be a very suitable dress to get for them."

TANGAMBALANGA.

Mr. Thomas Mitchell has been good enough to give the following information respecting the condition of the Aborigines under his care. Of the Tangambalanga tribe there are only eleven persons left; and of the Upper Murray tribe sixteen :—

"The condition of the Aborigines has considerably improved since the supplies from the Central Board have been regularly distributed to them.

* The Central Board are obliged to administer the funds entrusted to them with economy, and to study the wants of all the blacks. Though there are only twenty-two blacks who receive aid at this station, there were sent for them last year, besides a liberal supply of food, fifty blankets, thirty serge shirts and forty twill shirts, and thirty pairs of trousers for the men.

"They get their rations about once every month. The married ones get forty pounds of flour, sixteen pounds of sugar, one pound of tea, three-quarters of a pound of tobacco, and a pound and a half of soap, at one time. The single ones do not get them at any stated time; they wander from place to place, and come back when they are in want of food or clothing. They all get their blankets and tomahawks as soon as these are known to have arrived.

"The blacks are almost all fond of intoxicating drinks, but I have never known any of them to dispose of their food or clothing to obtain them. It is hardly possible to prevent them from obtaining drink, as they have as good a right to spend what they earn as a white man. The young men get a pound or two occasionally by cutting bark, tailing cattle, &c.; this they almost always lay out in drink, and treat all hands at the camp. They are not at all selfish amongst themselves, but they are so as regards the whites.

"The only game they kill is opossums, the skins of which they make into cloaks and dispose of, but I do not think they have made many of late years. They fish as usual; the fish are not so numerous as they used to be, in consequence, I presume, of several parties having made a trade of it to supply Beechworth and the neighboring towns and gold fields."

ECHUCA.

Mr. C. E. Strutt, the Honorary Correspondent of the Board at Echuca, has sent the following report:—

"The condition of the Aborigines does not, apparently, improve, and their numbers are decreasing.

"On receipt of the stores from the Central Board, notice is given to the Aborigines of the day on which the distribution will take place. The blankets are then distributed at the Court House to those who attend, and suitable articles of clothing are likewise issued.

"Should any be unable to attend, through sickness or age, a supply of the necessary articles is confided to the more trustworthy blacks on their account.

"The flour, tea, and sugar are issued in small quantities from time to time as required, for two or three days' consumption.

"I regret to have to report that the Aborigines still indulge to excess in intoxicating liquors, and have greater facilities than formerly for procuring them, owing to the great increase of public houses and beer-shops. The difficulty of obtaining sufficient evidence prevents a conviction in several instances; especially as greater caution is exercised by the publicans and beer-shop keepers, since three of their number were fined three pounds each for supplying the blacks with intoxicating liquors about three months since.

"Few of the Aborigines are at all inclined to work at any occupation requiring steady application. The men will occasionally assist as stockmen, and are generally in request during the shearing season to help in washing the sheep. Some are engaged as shepherds, and prove very useful so long as they have not access to spirituous liquors.

"Several of the women can wash well, and would be useful in household service if they could be induced to stay beyond a day or two.

"The supply of fish and of opossums is very great, and the Aborigines will catch them if pressed by hunger. They occasionally hunt or fish, to procure the means of purchasing spirits. They rarely attempt to catch kangaroos or the larger game unless furnished with firearms.

"There is less tendency to fighting and violence amongst the blacks than formerly, none of them having been killed in their quarrels for a considerable period, and the women are not so frequently and severely beaten. This is attributable in some degree to the example which has been made in sending some of the more ferocious blacks, and especially those who assault the women, to Sandhurst gaol for various terms of imprisonment, in proportion to the gravity of their offence.

"I may add, that an Aboriginal named Edward escaped from the custody of the police, but was so disgusted with the life he felt compelled to lead in the solitude of the bush, from fear of being re-apprehended, that he came in and surrendered himself to the police, after an absence of several weeks. He is now usefully employed on an adjoining station."

GUNBOWER, MURRAY RIVER.

Mr. George Houston, the Honorary Correspondent of the Board at Gunbower, in reply to inquiries, has sent the following report:—

"With regard to the condition of the Aborigines, it would be much improved if they could be prevented from obtaining liquor in the townships.

"While your supplies last I am in the habit of giving to each adult a full ration of tea and sugar, about 6 lbs. of flour, and a cake of tobacco (to the males a cake and a half) weekly, all smoke, children included. Several men are at present engaged constructing a brush fence, horses being supplied to draw the brush.

"One young man, Thomas Black, whom you have seen, I have just engaged for four months as a general servant, and two others as stockmen. Mostly all the males are engaged on stations at this period of the year (August), and until after shearing.

"After that they visit neighboring tribes and the townships to spend their money, and then they return to their fishing and hunting grounds to pass the summer months.

"Upon the whole the condition of the Aborigines in this neighborhood is, in my opinion, very much improved within the last three or four years, thanks to the liberality of your Board in supplying them with food and clothing during the winter months."

TYNTYNDYER, LOWER MURRAY.

A large number of blacks, about 104, on the Lower Murray, and under the care of Mr. Peter Beveridge. His Report is as follows:—

"The condition of the Aborigines in this district has improved very much during the last year, both morally and physically. The principal causes of this improvement are the stringent measures adopted by the magistrates and police in the matter of grog supply.

"If the New South Wales Government were to co-operate, there would not be such a thing as a drunken black in the district: as it is, the Aborigines are perfectly well aware that they can laugh at the Victorian authorities the moment they cross the Murray. They can always find vagabond white men ready and willing to fetch grog when supplied with the money, and this last desideratum is at times plentiful enough, more especially amongst the young men who are employed on the various stations. I may here state that most of the evils they now suffer from can be traced to intemperance.

"Some of the old people have been supplied by me with rations regularly, and at Swan Hill the same obtained as long as the stores supplied by the Central Board held out; when they were exhausted, however, the old blacks belonging to Swan Hill had to do without, or get them from those who were benevolent enough to supply them gratis—this, I am sorry to say, is not of very frequent occurrence.

"If the Central Board were to send up the supplies in the month of January in each year,* there would not be so much misery amongst the blacks as there always is when they are short of stores in the cold weather. When the cold winter months arrive they can neither get fish nor game, and the cumpung root, that they used to live upon during winter, in the advent of Europeans, requires too much labor to allow of their procuring it now, English customs having quite knocked on the head all their primitive habits.

"In conclusion, I may add that, at the present time, August, 1865, there is only one sick Aboriginal in the neighborhood, and he is suffering from hydatids, and beyond care."

ABORIGINAL SERVANTS.

It is now six years since the Central Board first brought under the notice of the Government the absolute necessity of amending the laws relating to the Aborigines, and nearly three years have elapsed since they furnished the draft of a Bill; and they regret to say that the circumstances of the colony have prevented your Excellency's advisers from taking those steps which are so urgently needed for the protection of the blacks and half-castes. Applications for redress are made to the Board from time to time by Aborigines who have been employed by the lower class of settlers to assist in bringing sheep and cattle to Melbourne, and who have been left in the city without the means of returning to their tribes. The Central Board are unable to compel the stock-drivers to pay their debts; and some cases of great hardship occur. On the Murray, and in the remoter parts of Gipps Land, it is easy for these persons to persuade the blacks to accompany them to Melbourne—they promise them high wages, and hold forth other inducements, but as soon as they reach the city, and sell their flocks and herds, they abandon the blacks, who have worked for them rather as slaves than servants, for weeks or months.

Such cases as these are, however, easily dealt with. Far different is the condition of the black and half-caste girls. These the Board are unable to protect. They cannot take them from their tribes by force, and rarely is it possible to persuade them to leave of their own accord. They hang on the outskirts of civilization, a disgrace to the colony, and a standing rebuke to those who profess to care for decency and to be offended by the constant exhibition of immorality and vice. Without the power to improve it, the Central Board has brought under their consideration constantly the sad condition of these poor children of the wilderness; and at present they know that it would be useless to urge the Government to bring in a Bill to amend the law. They know that as soon as possible the laws will be amended; and in the mean time they do what they can to prevent crime

* The new arrangement, it is hoped, will leave no cause for complaint.

and to save the blacks from the miseries which some of the whites seem to delight in inflicting on them.

PROTECTION OF FISHERIES.

The Central Board continue to give their attention to the protection of the fisheries and those swamps and lagoons where the Aborigines have been in the habit of procuring ducks, teal, swans, and other game. Vast quantities of fish are destroyed annually by netting, and the swivel gun is not less destructive to birds. Both fish and game are ruthlessly killed in such a manner as to injure, not only the interests of the blacks but those of the colonists generally; and any person who exerts himself and succeeds in checking the operations of those who follow the trade of wholesale slaughter, deserves the thanks of the colonists. If all the fish taken by the net were fit for consumption, and all the birds lamed by the swivel gun killed and brought to market, the injury would perhaps be deemed scarcely worthy of consideration; but the system of netting and shooting as now pursued is destructive of vast quantities of fish and birds which can never be used.

The Central Board continue to receive assistance from the Honorable J. G. Francis, the Commissioner of Trade and Customs.

PLACE OF INTERMENT FOR ABORIGINES.

The Trustees of the Melbourne Cemetery have been good enough, in compliance with a request made by the Central Board, to set apart a piece of ground for the interment of Aborigines. Formerly they were buried in the block where the bodies of the Chinese are interred.

THOMAS BUNGELENE.

Thomas Bungelene, an Aboriginal, who for some months was employed in the office in Melbourne, and gave evidence of some talent, is dead. A hope was entertained at one time that he would become a useful member of society; but, whether owing to defects in his early education or a natural propensity to evil, he became nearly as troublesome in the office as he was when on board the *Victoria*. He died of gastric fever at the house of Mr. Hinkins, Moonee Ponds, on the 3rd January, 1865.

GENERAL CONDITION OF THE ABORIGINES.

Unless the laws relating to the Aborigines are altered the Central Board will not be able to perfect their plans. They continue to supply stores and clothing; they endeavor to prevent the open sale of intoxicating liquors; they cause medical aid and medical comforts to be furnished to the sick; and they have formed a station where adult blacks and children can be educated; but still they feel that the more important work is left undone. A great number of black and half-caste children of both sexes are wandering about the country in idleness, and associating with persons who lead them into bad paths.

It is these the Central Board would wish to reclaim; but under present circumstances they can do but little, and that little feebly and ill. They might do much, and do it well, if the Bill which they have prepared, or some modification of it, were made law. And it is not unreasonable to hope that Parliament, which has provided liberally for the physical wants of the blacks, will gladly take into its consideration a measure having for its object the better management of the Aborigines.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your Excellency's most obdt. servant,

JAMES MACBAIN,
President.

To His Excellency,
The Officer Administering the Government
of the Colony of Victoria,
&c., &c., &c.