

BIG HOUSING PROGRAMME LAST YEAR

MANY STATIONS BENEFIT

An important development during the past year, was the adoption of a programme of erecting homes on town allotments in selected country centres. Construction was arranged through the Housing Commission, and the completed dwellings were allocated to selected aboriginal families which, after two years satisfactory tenancy, will be given the opportunity to purchase the house on a long-term rent-payment basis.

Such places have been completed in the following towns :—

Casino	4
Grafton	1
Dubbo	3
Yass	6

A contract was let to erect five houses in the town of Coonabarabran.

In addition, three houses from Cumerogunga Reserve have been moved to the town of Moama and modernised, and eight homes were erected on a newly acquired Reserve at Coff's Harbour in close proximity to the town.

Funds available to the Board have not permitted any extension of the building programme on Stations. Of the sixteen fully managed Stations, conducted by the Board, nine have been completely rebuilt. Of these, tenants of the new homes have been charged a nominal rental. This policy was adopted with the object of inculcating some sense of responsibility and preparing tenants to meet obligations which would normally be required of them in the community. However the response has been very disappointing. Too many residents believe they should have all the advantages but none of the responsibilities.

The position regarding those who occupy town houses as rent-purchasers is far more satisfactory, as all are so far up to date in their payments.

Apart from the seven Stations where only the older type of homes exist, there are many Reserves under the control of the Board, where it has not been possible to effect any improvement in accommodation. Additional to these, there are scores of aboriginal families living in small communities under most adverse conditions, mainly on river banks and the outskirts of country towns. It has not been possible to provide for these people in any way, except that a few have been given accommodation on Stations as residents have moved off.

A survey is at present being made of the overall housing needs of aborigines in New South Wales. When this is completed, it will be possible to estimate the cost of the work yet remaining to be done. It is anticipated, however, that to affect repairs and additions to such houses as are suitable for this, and to provide for the replacement of unsatisfactory dwellings, at least £500,000 would be required.

A good deal of repair work was completed to houses already existing on Stations, and land was purchased in a number of towns where it is proposed to continue the building programme next year.



Mrs. Fred Griffiths Snr. and the eagle she shot near her home at Bura Bee Dee. Wing span of over 7 feet.