

1929-30

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

R E P O R T

ON

THE ADMINISTRATION OF NORTH
AUSTRALIA

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED THE 30TH JUNE, 1929.

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EDUCATION.

The Supervisor's report shows that the number of children being educated during the year was 307, and that the average attendance was 207.2.

Periodical medical and dental examinations are to be carried out in future, and religious instruction is to be given by the clergymen of the North.

The two scholarships holders at the Southport School are doing well both in scholastics and athletics. This year the winner of the scholarship was Evelyn Winifred Dalton, who is now attending the Brisbane Girls' Grammar School.

STOCK BRANCH.

Although the season has been fairly dry, cattle from some of the holdings realized high prices in Adelaide.

Cattle inspected on the Barkly tablelands looked well and were free from tick. There was a total absence of the buffalo fly.

Included in the report of the Chief Inspector of Stock is the annual return of stock in this Territory.

DINGO FUND.

Rewards paid for scalps amounted to £1,218 15s., other expenditure being £7 19s. 9d., whilst the collections credited to the fund totalled £661 13s. 9d.

AGRICULTURE.

The inspector reports a record year for the progress of industry on the land, the chief crop being peanuts, which are equal to, if not better than, any peanuts grown elsewhere in Australia.

Broom millet grown in the North was sold in Sydney at £52 per ton.

The amount of cotton produced was only one ton, the growers finding peanuts a more remunerative crop.

BOTANIC GARDENS.

The gardens are the "show place" of the town and are much frequented by the residents and visitors.

Experimental plots are used by the curator. Many palms and trees are raised for distribution.

MINES BRANCH.

The Director of Mines reports a decrease in this year's production. The value of the yearly production of gold, other metals and minerals was almost the lowest on record.

Of the 78 engaged in mining, 60 were Europeans and 18 Chinese.

The revenue collected was £1,945 11s. 7d.

FISHERIES.

Six pearlers owning 31 boats have had a very successful year, the total take of mother-of-pearl shell being 204 tons 2 qrs. 8 lb., valued at approximately £37,238.

Approximately 247 Japanese and Koepangers are at present employed.

The value of trepang shipped to Hong Kong during the year was £1,148, representing an increase of £453 over last year's exports.

ABORIGINALS.

The conduct of aboriginals generally has been good, reports indicating that crime amongst the aboriginal population is decreasing.

During the year Mr. J. W. Bleakley, Chief Protector of Aboriginals for Queensland, conducted an inquiry into the status and conditions of the aboriginals and the half-castes in North and Central Australia. His report is now receiving attention by the Government.

It is estimated that the aboriginal population, including half-castes, of North Australia is 15,971.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINALS.

EMPLOYMENT.

During the year licenses to employ aboriginals were issued as follows :—

Country	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	307
Town	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	173
										<u>480</u>
Cancelled	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5

Agreements to the number of 220 were made.

Total Revenue—£224 5s.

As a result of inquiry into the conditions under which aboriginals are employed in country districts, certain recommendations for amelioration were submitted, but were deferred pending Mr. Bleakley's investigations.

TRUST FUND.

								£	s.	d.
Credit balance 1st July, 1928	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	908	16	3
Receipts during year	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,491	14	4
								<u>2,400</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>
Withdrawals during year	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,199	19	8
								<u>1,200</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>
Balance, 1st July, 1929	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

The total expenditure for the year was, North Australia, £3,059 18s. 1d., Canberra, £446 13s. 6d., a total of £3,506 11s. 7d.

The expenditure was apportioned as follows :—

								£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Canberra—													
Purchase of blankets, &c.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	446	13	6
North Australia—													
Rationing old and infirm aboriginals, Darwin excluded	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	836	17	5			
Compound clinic, half-caste home, including sanitary charges, purchase drugs, telephone, aged and infirm aboriginals, Darwin	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,656	1	3			
Meals supplied to V.D. patients and suspects in country districts	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	272	13	7			
Defence, aboriginals	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	48	11	6			
Fares, sick aboriginals and others, including police escort	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	160	8	8			
Sundries	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	85	5	8			
								<u>3,059</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>1</u>			
Total	..	..	..	..	..	..	..				3,506	11	7

Compound.—In pursuance of the policy of reducing the cost of maintenance of the compound and kindred institutions by utilizing the services of ambulatory patients, the following revenue was earned, including £181 14s. 6d. credited to the half-caste home and the compound for clothing and goods supplied to the Aboriginal Branch :—

								£	s.	d.
Sale of firewood	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	162	15	0
Fish	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	50	0	8
Clothing	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	134	5	6
Labour and miscellaneous	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	191	17	5
Sustenance of aboriginals employed by the Government	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	179	9	5
Contributions by fathers of half-castes	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	41	10	0
								<u>759</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>0</u>

The average daily number maintained at the compound and half-caste home was 194; there are now 88 half-castes in the home (28 males, 60 females). Eight of this number are employed by private employers. Every protection is afforded those girls at the institution who are so employed.

Seven new huts with concrete floors and a new store were erected at the compound during the year.

The actual cost of maintenance of the Institution including the salary of the Acting-Superintendent and Acting-Matron was £1,881 7s. 11d. or about 6d. per head per day.

Sick aboriginals in rural districts were given local medical attention by police, and station managers. Obstinate and important cases were sent to Darwin for treatment.

The amount expended in feeding sick aboriginals in country districts was £272 13s. 7d. Expenses incurred in transporting aboriginal patients to Darwin totalled £160 8s.

Supplies of drugs and equipment were forwarded regularly to rural treatment centres.

Details of cases treated at the Darwin clinic are shown in the report of the chief medical officer.

Distress amongst aged and infirm aboriginals was alleviated by the issue of rations and blankets.

Offences.—Details of offences committed by aborigines during the year ended 30th June, 1929 :—

Offence.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Assault	2	..	2
Drunkenness	12	4	16
Larceny	1	1	2
Murder	1	..	1
Opium smoking	7	6	13
Opium articles (possession of)	6	1	7
Resisting arrest	1	..	1
Unlawful possession	30	..	30
Unlawful destruction of property	1	..	1
Other offences	22	3	25
	83	15	98

The behaviour of aborigines has been satisfactory. Reports from country protectors indicate that crime amongst the aboriginal population is decreasing.

Aboriginal Population.—The total aboriginal population of North Australia, including half-castes, on the 30th June, 1929, was 15,971, made up of 8,917, males and 7,054 females.

In connexion with the census taken during the year under review, special arrangements were made with the district protectors and as a result of the careful inquiries made by them, a much closer estimate has been made available.

ABORIGINAL CENSUS.

District.	Full Bloods.				Half-castes.				Totals.		Total.
	Adults.		Children.		Adults.		Children.		M.	F.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.			
Anthony's Lagoon	86	66	31	28	..	3	5	7	122	104	226
Borroloola	301	265	90	82	10	5	9	4	410	356	766
Brocks Creek	406	284	100	70	7	6	..	..	513	360	873
Daly River	1,730	950	260	170	4	4	3	2	1,997	1,126	3,123
Darwin	1,405	1,166	358	191	38	65	63	86	1,864	1,508	3,372
Katherine	130	116	35	44	4	3	3	..	172	163	335
Maranboy	131	97	21	20	3	..	..	..	155	117	272
Newcastle Waters	136	151	40	32	13	12	5	10	194	205	399
Pine Creek	46	34	4	4	3	1	..	1	53	40	93
Rankine River	43	30	10	12	3	5	6	6	62	53	115
Roper River	1,359	1,370	588	582	12	15	17	13	1,976	1,980	3,956
Timber Creek	747	465	232	161	12	4	9	4	1,000	634	1,634
Wave Hill	305	324	84	78	3	4	7	2	399	408	807
	6,825	5,318	1,853	1,474	112	127	127	135	8,917	7,054	15,971

The slight decrease as compared with last year in the total number of aborigines is attributable to greater accuracy on the part of recording officers than to an actual diminution in population.

Mr. J. W. Bleakley, Chief Protector of Aborigines for the State of Queensland, was appointed on the 31st May 1928, to inquire into the status and condition of aborigines and half-castes in North Australia and Central Australia.

Every assistance was afforded Mr. Bleakley to enable him to pursue his investigations. The published report was received and the recommendations and suggestions contained therein are now receiving the consideration of the Honorable the Minister.

Amending Ordinances concerning the employment of female aborigines and controlling the use of firearms by aborigines were gazetted. New regulations relating to the removal of aborigines and half-castes under recognizance, and the granting of permits to aborigines to remain in prohibited areas, were duly promulgated.

CECIL COOK,

Chief Protector of Aborigines.

REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR OF AGRICULTURE AND CURATOR OF BOTANIC GARDENS.

BOTANIC GARDENS.

The work undertaken during the year by the small staff employed has been well carried out. The system, now well established, which gives each man, even the aboriginal, his own particular functions, has been most successful and the work done reflects much credit on the workers.

The Nursery.—A large number of plants, economic and ornamental, was distributed. A collection of exotic palms is being grown. Amongst the palms introduced was *rapphia ruffia*, the raffia palm, which produces a fibre which is used in many ways. The seed of this palm was obtained from Madagascar through the courtesy of Mr. C. W. D. Conacher, and we were successful in germinating 25 plants. Some of these plants are now growing in the gardens and looking well. Some seeds of *Eucalyptus nardimiana* from the Rain forest of New Guinea were received from Mr. Lane-Poole, the Inspector-General of Forests. These produced about twenty plants, several of which have been planted out, one being now five feet high. The tree is one of the largest of eucalypts and produces a valuable timber.