

1941.

---

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

---

REPORT

ON THE

ADMINISTRATION

OF

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

FOR

YEAR 1940-41.

---

By Authority :

L. F. JOHNSTON, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra.  
(Printed in Australia.)

F.7593.

## THE PUBLIC TRUSTEE.

During the financial year 1940-41, the new estates numbered 31, making the current total 94, of which 19 were finalized, leaving 75 still current.

|   |    | £  | s. | d.          |
|---|----|----|----|-------------|
| The following is an analysis of the year's transactions :—        |    |    |    |             |
| Value of estates current 30th June, 1940                          | .. | .. | .. | 4,996 18 10 |
| Receipts as per cash book from 1st July, 1940, to 30th June, 1941 |    |    |    | 3,284 14 10 |
| Interest on Commonwealth Savings Bank accounts                    | .. | .. |    | 36 2 1      |
|   |    |    |    | 8,317 15 9  |
| Disbursements from 1st July, 1940, to 30th June, 1941—            |    |    |    |             |
| Duty, fees and postage  | .. | .. | .. | 68 4 4      |
| Claims paid to creditors of estates                               | .. | .. | .. | 624 18 4    |
| Amounts paid to beneficiaries                                     | .. | .. | .. | 2,028 5 11  |
|   |    |    |    | 2,721 8 7   |
|   |    |    |    | 5,596 7 2   |
| Assets as at 30th June, 1941—                                     |    |    |    |             |
| Commonwealth Bank balance   | .. | .. | .. | 1,894 9 2   |
| Commonwealth Savings Bank   | .. | .. | .. | 3,701 18 0  |
|   |    |    |    | 5,596 7 2   |

## PATROL SERVICE.

The vessels *Kuru* and *Larrakia* have continued to operate in the Patrol Service. During the year the former travelled 4,890 miles and the latter 2,649 miles. Both vessels have given good service.

*Kuru* underwent her first major overhaul during this year—all work being carried out in Darwin and the vessel being slipped.

The engineers' workshop is in process of being fitted up and this will make the Patrol Service self-contained.

The Patrol Service has co-operated with the Naval and Military services and has rendered assistance to the Works and Services Branch in works about the Harbour.

## NATIVE AFFAIRS.

In my last report I mentioned that the recommendations of the Director of Native Affairs to implement the policy of the Commonwealth Government had received the approval of the Minister. Definite progress in placing these plans into operation has been made during the year.

The Native Administration Ordinance which provides for Courts of Native Affairs presided over by Magistrates for native affairs, for the punishment of juvenile native offenders, &c., was brought into effect on 21st August, 1940.

The various Ordinances have been amended with a view to protecting natives from improper dealings with whites, and from the evils consequent on the use of intoxicating liquors and drugs. The penalties which may be imposed for breaches of the law in this regard have been made very severe.

Arrangements have been made and partly effected for the training of half-caste children in Church Mission establishments.

Funds were made available to the Roman Catholic and Methodist Missions to enable them to provide establishments at Melville and Croker Islands and a number of children have already been transferred to these Missions from Government institutions at Darwin, Pine Creek and Alice Springs.

It is expected that similar arrangements with the Church of England will be finalized in the near future, resulting in the establishment of a Mission at Groote Eylandt and the completion of the transfer of all children from Government institutions.

The areas reserved for the exclusive use of natives were considerably increased. The Arnhem Land Reserve was increased by the addition of portion of Coburg Peninsula Flora and Fauna Reserve as well as Croker and Darch and other adjacent islands. The reserve in the south-west portion of the Territory was amended by the addition of country near its north-eastern corner and including Haasts Bluff, and the elimination of an area of useless desert country.

The whole of Melville and Buchanan Islands has been reserved. These islands carry a large aboriginal population at present and by an adequate control system it is hoped to reduce, if not entirely prevent, contact between aboriginals and Asiatics.

Delissaville station, which is situated on Cox's Peninsula across the harbour from Darwin, has been acquired and converted into a depot for aged and infirm aboriginals. Refractory cases are also sent there for periods of detention.

Owing to the large influx of road and other workers as well as of military personnel it has been found necessary to take action to prevent undesirable contact between aboriginals and whites and to this end an area 5 miles in width on each side of the North-South Road has been declared a prohibited area for aboriginals. Areas surrounding towns, settlements and camps have also been prohibited for aboriginals other than those in employment and their families.

The very dry year experienced in the southern portion of the Territory resulted in a serious shortage of native game and vegetables, and in consequence supplementary supplies of rations had to be made available for the aged and infirm and in some cases new depots had to be opened to provide for all aboriginals in the vicinity.

At the Granites, the drying up of water supplies prevented aboriginals from travelling in search of food, and to alleviate their distress several tons of rations were despatched. This temporary relief depot was closed as soon as rains enabled the natives to again subsist on their normal food.

At Haasts Bluff, a permanent depot has been opened and aboriginals who belong to that district are being encouraged to return there.

The expenditure on aboriginals, not including salaries, or subsidies during the year, amounted to £13,690. Subsidies to missions amounted to £4,250.

The number of natives who were rationed and clothed at Government depots during the year was 918.

The demand for aboriginal and half-caste employees has greatly exceeded the supply available and this is partly due to the repatriation of a large number of people to their rural districts. Every available native in Darwin was in employment during the year. In country districts large numbers of natives are employed in primary industries, such as buffalo shooting, timber cutting, pastoral and agricultural. About 50 are also employed on small craft trading on the coast, and others are employed in pearl fishing.

The demand for female half-castes for domestic duties has always greatly exceeded the supply, and with the rapid increase of population in Darwin, the shortage is very keenly felt. Every male half-caste in Darwin has been employed at award rates of pay, and the half-caste population as a whole is enjoying the boom conditions at present prevailing.

Receipts from employers' contributions to the Aboriginal Medical Benefit Fund amounted to £987.

It is part of the existing policy to permit suitable half-castes to manage their own affairs and during this year fourteen male and sixteen female half-castes were exempted from the provisions of the Aboriginals Ordinance. Fifteen female half-castes married—six with Europeans and nine with half-castes.

Compensation amounting to £1,376 4s. was paid in respect of half-caste homes acquired for defence purposes and five houses were erected by the Administration to accommodate the families who were deprived by the acquisition.

Notwithstanding the abnormal conditions at present prevailing convictions for crimes committed by half-castes numbered only 69, which is 30 less than during the previous year. The convictions against aboriginals, however, increased very considerably. They numbered 381, which is 114 in excess of the previous year. The increase, however, was chiefly in respect of offences such as drinking liquor and being on prohibited areas.

Measures to combat this have been adopted and by regular nightly patrolling of camps and the restriction of migration of natives to Darwin it is anticipated such offences will become far less frequent.

At the close of the year the half-caste population numbered 1,037, which showed an increase of 135 on the previous year, while the aboriginal population numbered 13,451, a decrease of 446.

The number of half-castes in Government and subsidized institutions was 98 males and 153 females—a total of 251 as compared with 261 at the close of the previous year.

The following table gives details of the aboriginal census taken at 30th June, 1941 :—

|           |    |    |    |    | Aboriginals. | Half-castes. |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|--------------|--------------|
| Adults—   |    |    |    |    |              |              |
| Male      | .. | .. | .. | .. | 6,025        | 284          |
| Female    | .. | .. | .. | .. | 4,448        | 249          |
| Children— |    |    |    |    |              |              |
| Male      | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,521        | 266          |
| Female    | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,457        | 238          |
| Total     | .. | .. | .. | .. | 13,451       | 1,037        |

Distribution of aboriginals and half-castes—

|                              |    |    |    |    | Male. | Female. |
|------------------------------|----|----|----|----|-------|---------|
| Nomadic                      | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3,544 | 2,892   |
| Supervised camps             | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3,952 | 3,160   |
| Not in supervised camps      | .. | .. | .. | .. | 600   | 340     |
|                              |    |    |    |    | 8,096 | 6,392   |
| Number in regular employment | .. |    |    | .. | 2,285 | 1,039   |

LAND SETTLEMENT.

A steady policy is being pursued with land settlement generally. Bond Springs, in the vicinity of Alice Springs, has been subdivided and allotted to applicants.

Areas of Newcastle Waters are now available for leasing and in the next twelve months it is hoped to deal with over 16,000 square miles of country for similar purposes throughout the land districts of the Territory, exclusive of the Darwin and Gulf cattle district. This area will require a special policy.

The method in regard to these areas is that they are first inspected and reported upon by the field officers concerned. They are then surveyed and lithographs are circulated throughout the Commonwealth which give full descriptions of the land, and improvements.

With the heavy calls upon survey officers for defence surveys delays are inevitable, but nevertheless, as previously mentioned, the surveyors and their staffs have done excellent work.

Leaseholders now have their boundaries or starting points clearly defined and can fence along them.

DARWIN.

Work has proceeded steadily in Darwin. Streets have been bitumenized, kerbs and gutters have been constructed and a plan is being followed.

The most important event in regard to Darwin was the visit of Mr. R. A. McInnis, Brisbane Town Planner, who prepared a most comprehensive report. The main points of the report have been approved by the Government and will be implemented as funds become available.

Darwin has now its water supply and, although defence requirements must come first, the advantages of the supply are already realized.

CONCLUSION.

This report has been curtailed to the utmost limit and is simply a very bare account of the progress of the Northern Territory for the year under review. In my opinion, it does show that the Northern Territory is rapidly becoming an asset and that the old days of isolation and stagnation are well behind.

The staff in the Northern Territory have carried out their increased duties most efficiently.

The officers of the Department of the Interior have been most helpful and I am once again personally indebted to the Secretary, Mr. J. A. Carrodus, C.B.E., for his co-operation and advice

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

C. L. A. ABBOTT, Administrator.