

- The acquisition of Yalata Station, partly as a home for the remnants of the tribes in the western district of the State, and

- The plan to build houses in the country for selected young aboriginal couples.



“On Yalata Station the 350 aborigines, who are split up into small groups and travel about at will, are able to satisfy their tribal instincts by hunting and holding corroborees,” said Mr. Penhall.

“They live in native shelters, and some wander off the property a little at times. An officer from the Lutheran mission at Koonibba, who lives at Colona, the head station, distributes rations and exercises a friendly supervision. Many of the children live at Koonibba and attend the special school there.

“Negotiations with the Lutheran mission for the working of the property in the interests of the aborigines, in conjunction with the board, are still in progress.

Houses

“The young men will be trained in sheep husbandry, including shearing, etc., and as the property touches the Great Australian Bight, we hope they will later engage in fishing to supplement their larder.

“The board hopes the S.A. Housing Trust will build the first rural-type houses for young aboriginal couples by the end of the year.

“The sites for these houses have not yet been fixed. As it is an experiment, only a few will be built at first. The board will make a careful selection from young couples who have passed through Point Pearce and Point McLeay Mission Schools.

“The idea is that these young people will settle down in areas where employment is available, and their children will grow up in the district, attend local schools, and be assimilated into the general community.”



Three pretty girls from Burnt Bridge. Eileen Button, Mavis Lang and Mary Button.

SELF HELP IS NECESSARY

Living Conditions Bad

It is a matter for regret that so many aborigines still reside in what can, at the best, be described as sub-standard dwellings. Very many, particularly those off the Board's Stations and Reserves, can only be described as hovels. Water and sanitation facilities are lacking, and conditions generally are extremely poor.

The Board recognises that the erection of even modest dwellings of modern design, with provision for adequate segregation of the sexes, bathing and laundry facilities, a proper sanitary service, and some degree of comfort in furnishing, is of the greatest importance.

In recent years, the housing programme resulted in the erection on stations and reserves of a substantial number of good type cottages. During the year under review, this programme was necessarily curtailed owing to the provision of only a limited amount from the Commonwealth General Loan Account. This amounted to a sum of £50,000. It was possible to complete and occupy:—



24 cottages at Moree Station,

14 cottages at Wilcannia Reserve,

and to complete other work commenced last financial year.

All tenants of new residences are required to pay a nominal amount as rent. This is designed to impress upon them their obligations as members of the community and to instil in them some degree of domestic pride and a sense of personal possession, which many of them lack, and which qualities are so necessary if they are to become assimilated. The response has been disappointing, and the Board is concerned that so many appear to have no sense of responsibility in this direction.

While the Board has pursued its rebuilding programme within the limit of funds at its disposal, there are many aborigines who could take some steps in this direction themselves. Employment is fairly readily available and many men are earning high wages in semi-skilled and even unskilled occupations. The tendency is to live for the present and, with very few exceptions, little thought is given to provision for the future or even the acquirement of a home and the barest comforts of home life.