



SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

7 JAN 1963

[No. 20.]

454

# REPORT OF THE ABORIGINES PROTECTION BOARD FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE, 1940.

*Ordered by the House of Assembly to be printed, 21st November, 1940.*

[Estimated cost of printing (275), £8 5s. 11d.]

Aborigines Protection Board, Adelaide, 12th September, 1940.

To His Excellency, SIR CHARLES MALCOLM BARCLAY-HARVEY, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor in and over the State of South Australia, and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

May it please Your Excellency :

We do ourselves the honour to submit the annual report of the Aborigines Protection Board for the year ended 30th June, 1940.

During the year under review legislation relating to the protection and control of aborigines in the State of South Australia was amended. The following is a summary of the principal amendments :—

## 1. ABORIGINES PROTECTION BOARD.

For some years there had been a growing conviction that the responsibility associated with the control of the aborigines was a burden much too great for a single individual. In consequence, provision was made for the appointment of the Aborigines Protection Board, and for the abolition of the office of "Chief Protector of Aborigines." Parliament decided that the Board is to consist of the Honourable the Minister of the Crown, to whom the administration of the Aborigines Act is committed, and six other members, two of whom shall be women, the Minister to be the Chairman of the Board. The Board is charged with the duty of controlling and promoting the welfare of the aborigines.

The Secretary of the Board is the permanent head of the Department, and is responsible for the administration of the department.

## 2. DEFINITION OF "ABORIGINE."

This section of the Act was amended so as to include and bring under control every person in the State descended from the original inhabitants of Australia, and also, to eliminate all reference to caste. The change was found to be necessary, as some of the quadroon, and nearly white aborigines, appear to need a greater measure of supervision than those of the full blood. The definition provided in earlier legislation enabled many of these people, when charged with offences against the Act, to prove that they were not aborigines within the meaning of the Act.

## 3. EXEMPTION FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE ABORIGINES ACT.

The amending legislation has made possible the exemption from the provisions of the Act, aborigines who, by reason of their character, standard of intelligence, and development, are considered to be capable of living in the general community without supervision. It will, therefore, be possible for any person brought under the control of the Board by the revised definition, or any other aborigine, to be exempted from the provisions of the Aborigines Act.

## 4. OFFENCES AGAINST FEMALE ABORIGINES.

"Any male person, other than an aborigine, who, not being lawfully married to a female aborigine :—

- (a) habitually consorts with a female aborigine ; or
- (b) keeps a female aborigine as his mistress ; or
- (c) has carnal knowledge of a female aborigine ;

shall be guilty of an offence against the Aborigines Act."

This section of the Act will, doubtless, exercise a restraining influence on, and facilitate action against, any unscrupulous white man who, regardless of the serious consequences of his action, associates with aboriginal women.

The Aborigines Act, 1934-1939 came into operation on the 1st February, 1940, and the following persons were appointed to be members of the Aborigines Protection Board :—

The Hon. M. McIntosh, Commissioner of Public Works (Chairman).  
Professor J. B. Cleland, M.D., Ch.M. (Deputy Chairman).  
Constance Mary Cooke, J.P.  
Alice Maude Johnston.  
The Reverend Canon S. T. C. Best.  
Charles Duguid, M.A., M.B., Ch.B., F.R.F.P. & S. (Glasgow), F.R.A.C.S.  
Leonard John Cook, R.D.A.

The first meeting of the Board was held on the 27th February, 1940, and was attended by the full Board and the Secretary, Mr. W. R. Penhall.

The Board has therefore been in control for only four months of the period under review. Members of the Board have entered upon their duties realizing the responsible and difficult nature of the work. Visits have been paid to Point Pearce and Point McLeay Stations, and to many of the native camps and villages, in order to gain first-hand knowledge of the problems confronting the Board. Information gathered during these visits has been tabulated, and will be considered at a series of special meetings of the Board to be held during the current year.

The Advisory Council of Aborigines, which rendered excellent service for many years, was abolished when the Aborigines Protection Board was established.

It is desired here to place on record sincere appreciation of the work of the Council in sharing the burden of aboriginal problems with the Chief Protector of Aborigines.

Valued services by police officers, missionaries, scientists, and pastoralists, together with the various organizations working for the physical, mental, moral and spiritual welfare of the aborigines, have been rendered during the year. In addition the lady members of the Board have devoted considerable time to visiting sick aborigines in the various hospitals in and around the City. The native people have derived great benefit from this co-operative effort.

#### ABORIGINAL POPULATION.

The following figures are taken from particulars supplied to the Government Statist by police officers, station owners and managers. The total aboriginal population on the 30th June, 1940, viz., 4,954, represents a net increase of 73 as compared with last year. The numbers recorded vary from year to year, the nomadic habits of the aborigines preclude the possibility of an accurate census being taken. The classification of those recorded as at 30th June, 1940, is as follows:—

	Full-blood.		Others.		Total.		
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	Total.
<b>On Mission Stations—</b>							
In employment .....	12	21	135	11	147	32	179
Others .....	181	170	316	476	497	646	1,143
Others in employment .....	266	108	207	52	473	160	633
Dependants of employed .....	143	128	95	132	238	260	498
All other .....	837	838	440	386	1,277	1,224	2,501
<b>Grand Total .....</b>	<b>1,439</b>	<b>1,265</b>	<b>1,193</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>2,632</b>	<b>2,322</b>	<b>4,954</b>
Adults .....	1,094	910	753	570	1,847	1,480	3,327
Children .....	345	355	440	487	785	842	1,627

Full-bloods numbered 2,704 or 55 per cent of the total, divided thus—Adults, 2,004; children, 700.

Others number 2,250 (45 per cent of total)—Adults, 1,323; children, 927.

*On Mission Stations.*—On the several government and private mission stations there were 1,322 aborigines, of whom 179 were reported to be employed. On these stations there were 384 full-blood and 948 other aborigines.

*In Regular Employment.*—The total reported to be in regular employment was 812. In addition to the 179 employed on mission stations, there were 633 recorded as otherwise employed—chiefly on pastoral holdings. These 633 employed aborigines were reported as having 498 dependants.

In addition to the 1,322 aborigines on mission stations, and the 633 otherwise employed with their 498 dependants, there were 2,501 aborigines (1,675 full-bloods and 826 others) who could be accounted for by the various police officers and pastoralists. As stated above, there are still a number in the wild state or “gone bush,” for whom it is impossible to give even an estimated number.

The births and deaths at Point McLeay, Point Pearce and Koonibba for the year 1939-40 were reported as follows:—

*Point McLeay Station.*—Births, 17 others; deaths, 1 full-blood, 16 others. The number on the station on the 30th June, 1940, was 10 full-bloods, 363 others, total 373.

*Point Pearce Station.*—Births, 11 others; deaths, 15 others. The number on the station on the 30th June, 1940, was 3 full-bloods, 323 others, total 326.

*Koonibba Mission Station.*—Births, 1 full-blood, 6 others; deaths, 5 full-bloods, 2 others. The number on the station on the 30th June, 1940, was 71 full-bloods, 155 others, total 226.

#### REPORTS FROM PROTECTORS, SUPERINTENDENTS AND MISSIONARIES.

##### NORTH-WESTERN DIVISION.

The inspector of police at Port Augusta, Inspector S. R. Parsonage, reporting on the aborigines in the northern and western police districts, states that there is an abundance of natural food outside the settled areas, with the exception of that part of the State along the Trans-Australian Railway Line. All detribalized aborigines, with the exception of those working on farms and stations, or engaged in rabbit trapping, etc., receive rations, and most of them are able to supplement the ration issue by earning small amounts doing odd jobs and by rabbit trapping and hunting game. Rabbit traps have been provided in many cases, and the aborigines were able to earn good wages. A large number of station hands have enlisted for military service, and the aborigines have availed themselves of the opportunity thus created to obtain station work.

*Port Augusta, “Umeevarra” Mission.*—An area of land, 200 acres in extent, purchased some time ago, has been declared to a reserve for aborigines. This land is situated about two miles north of Port Augusta. Six two-roomed cottages are almost completed on this reserve, and additional cottages will be provided as required.

The school building was removed from its former site to a suitable position on the reserve. The native scholars are very bright and happy; an inspection during the year revealed steady progress.

*Ernabella Mission (Presbyterian).*—The acting superintendent reports that the medical work amongst the aged, infirm, and sick aborigines has been successfully maintained. Dr. Charles Duguid has rendered great service in this work, co-operating with the department in the selection of necessary medical supplies, and advising on many matters connected with the welfare of the aborigines in this area.

A pedal wireless set installed by the mission is proving of great value in dealing with cases of serious illness.

During the year several buildings, including a school building, were erected by the Mission.

The school teacher, having made a rapid conquest of the language problem, is rendering good service at Ernabella, all instruction being given in Pitjindjara, which is the language of the people. School books and materials are provided by the Aborigines Protection Board.

The large majority of the aborigines in this area earn their own living by hunting for game and natural foods. In addition, the men who engage in “dogging” receive from the Mission goods to the full value of the scalps, viz., 7s. 6d., less freight charges.

The Ernabella Mission is performing great service to the aborigines in the north-western parts of the State by delaying the inevitable process of detribalization, and preparing the children to take their place in the community, of which they must eventually form a part.

*United Aborigines Mission, Ooldea.*—The superintendent reports that the chief activities of the Mission are related to the welfare of the children. In addition to the ordinary subjects they are taught to be self reliant and to practice self help. The boys are also instructed in woodwork and gardening.

Wireless contact is maintained with the Kalgoorlie branch of the Australian Aerial Medical Services, and in this way many serious cases of sickness are successfully treated.

Large numbers of camp natives have been provided with rations, medical supplies, etc. They spend a considerable amount of time in making curios and native weapons for sale to the public.

The Ooldea Mission presents a difficult problem in that the people living there are too far removed from the larger centres of population to have a reasonable chance of securing employment, moreover, they have not had an opportunity of acquiring a working knowledge of pastoral activities, because the area in which they live consists of poor, unoccupied land. This is regrettable, as, generally speaking, the aborigines prove to be good stockmen.

The general scale of rations provided for the aborigines needs to be reviewed, both as to character and volume, and also the number of blankets issued by the department each year. The need to do this is particularly pressing at Ooldea, because of the paucity of natural vegetable foods, and the complete absence of game.

In order to make adequate provision a considerable increase in the amount voted for this purpose will be required.

*United Aborigines Mission, Nepabunna.*—The superintendent of the Nepabunna Mission reports a successful year's work with very little unemployment. The men not engaged on surrounding stations were provided with rabbit traps, and were able to earn good wages. More than 22,000 rabbit skins were sold, and also a large number of fox skins. As the rabbits were trapped in the district, it will be seen that the aborigines are performing useful community service in addition to maintaining themselves and their families.

The conduct and health of the inmates have been satisfactory. A two-roomed cottage and also a small hospital building were erected.

The medical supply has been maintained as in past years, the cases treated being generally of a minor character.

*United Aborigines Mission, Finnis Springs.*—The school work has been well maintained; 17 children are in attendance, and, in addition to the ordinary subjects, instruction is given in domestic economy and sewing. The girls are now capable of making their own clothing. The boys and young men are taught to be stockmen and drovers.

A dam was ploughed and scooped out, and a large underground concrete tank, 13ft. in diameter, and 12ft. deep commenced. The natives have proved very proficient in the art of making concrete bricks for use in the school building and in other work.

*United Aborigines Mission, Colebrook Home, Quorn.*—Fifteen boys and 16 girls were in residence during the year. Four boys were placed in employment, two being engaged on farm work, one boy for work on a station, and one for a firm of electrical engineers. Two boys are now employed by this firm, and are doing well. Four children attend the high school, and 19 the primary school. Three children obtained the Qualifying Certificate.

*United Aborigines Mission, Swan Reach.*—There were 76 aborigines on this Mission on the 30th June.

Flood conditions on the river hampered the work of the Mission very considerably during the early part of the year. Most of the reserve is low level land, subject to periodic flooding, and therefore unsuitable as a permanent home for the aborigines. The acquisition of more suitable land along the river is urgently necessary.

Approximately 100 young fruit trees were planted, also a large number of grape vines.

The Aborigines Protection Board provided a water service for each cottage, and many fine flower and vegetable gardens were established.

The health of this community was rather unsatisfactory during the period under review. A survey of all inmates suspected of chest complaints resulted in two or three being sent for investigation at the clinic of the Royal Adelaide Hospital. Special issues of milk, oatmeal, biscuits, bread, and meat are provided for the sick, in addition to ordinary rations.

*Lutheran Mission, Koonibba.*—The superintendent reports:—"The year under review has been satisfactory. The spiritual work has continued to make headway. This fact is reflected in the conduct of the people, which has been very good."

A new school building is in course of erection. There are 80 children in attendance, and the work is of a high order.

The children's home is also an excellent institution; the children of this Mission should, later on, reflect the advantage of a childhood spent in such a home.

Dr. Gibson, the medical officer of the Mission, and Sister Hitchcox, the sister in charge of the local hospital, continue to render effective service in the medical sphere. Sixty-nine patients were in hospital during the year, and a daily average of 30 outpatients were also treated.

A successful year was experienced on the farm, 5,674 bags of wheat being harvested. The sheep shorn yielded 30 bales of wool. A number of aborigines were engaged in trapping rabbits, and made good wages. There was practically no unemployment in the district.

*Point McLeay Station.*—The superintendent reports a slight decline in population.

The medical work has proceeded satisfactorily under the direction of Dr. F. B. Turner and Sister Goldfinch.

The conduct of the natives has been satisfactory.

There are more than 100 scholars on the roll at the local school. In addition to the head teacher, Mr. W. T. Lawrie, there are two assistant teachers. Mrs. Lawrie instructs the children in the domestic arts.

The Board proposes to examine very carefully the question of "after school" education for the native boys and girls at Point McLeay, and other centres, so as to provide some form of industrial training.

Rations are supplied to every native unable to obtain employment, and firewood is provided for every home and camp free of charge.

Special rations are provided for sick and infirm natives, and each family on the Station receives a daily allowance of milk. Single men work two days in return for rations.

During the year three new cottages, each of two rooms, and one of four rooms were erected. Other cottages were repaired.

A number of very old houses on the station are beyond repair, and other houses, not large enough to accommodate the families living in them, need additional rooms.

A larger amount of work will be required for the erection of new houses and the addition of rooms to existing houses, so as to improve the conditions under which the people live.

The dairy herd was tested for tuberculosis, and has now been certified as an accredited tubercle-free herd. Approximately 1,000 sheep were carried throughout the year, and the lambing was satisfactory. The flock yielded 36 bales of wool, which realized £400. Eighty-eight acres of oats yielded 100 tons of hay. The lucerne crop of 70 acres was very satisfactory, and there is now a good lucerne pasture of 130 acres. The crop of barley and oats produced 300 tons of ensilage, which is held in reserve for the relief of the depleted pastures in summer. Thirty tons of lucerne were cut from 60 acres, and 300 acres of pasture land were top dressed with 100lb. of superphosphate per acre.







