

04608902

In the absence of local institutions for delinquent children, the Director is dependent on State welfare authorities and church institutions in the States for the placement of such children. Remedial institutions for boys are mainly run by State Governments and their accommodation is limited.

*Receiving Homes.* Two receiving homes in Darwin and one in Alice Springs provide accommodation for State children awaiting placement, children taken into custody who may be charged as neglected or uncontrollable, and children awaiting placement in foster homes or institutions.

Dundas House, a new receiving home at Darwin, was opened on 5th July, 1961. It is a modern brick building with accommodation for twelve children and two staff members. During the year 84 children were admitted including several babies who were receiving out-patient treatment at the Darwin Hospital, or whose mothers were receiving medical attention. Many of the children remained for periods of over one week and those of school age were enrolled at Darwin schools.

A home for adolescent girls opened in Darwin on 26th July, 1961. This home has accommodation for seven girls and serves as a receiving and holding centre. Since opening, 19 girls have been accommodated for various lengths of time; 14 of these were State children, of whom four were sent to training institutions in Queensland and South Australia, six to private families, two were enrolled at the United Church Hostel, Darwin, and two, who are sisters, are living at the home pending further investigations. The home is well and attractively furnished and provides the girls with the chance to gain some knowledge of cooking, dressmaking and typing.

The receiving home at Alice Springs accommodated 44 children for periods varying from a few days to several months during the year. A third entrance was fitted to the southern end of the building as an emergency exit in case of fire and fire extinguishers were installed. A new hot water system was installed during 1961-62.

*Adoptions.* During the year seven adoptions were assisted, six of which were finalized. The foster parents of another child are seeking his adoption.

The adoption of children by interstate families entailed some difficulties because of the differences in procedures between the States. Although these difficulties are usually overcome the delay is often protracted and can cause concern to the adopting parents.

*Institutions for Part-Aboriginal Children.* There are four homes for part-Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory conducted by church bodies and subsidized by the Government. These homes accommodate children committed to the care of the Director of Child Welfare; children placed by parents for various reasons; and children of Aboriginal mothers and unknown non-Aboriginal fathers who have, with the mothers' consent, been transferred from Aboriginal camps throughout the Territory. The homes are the Retta Dixon Home at Darwin, the Garden Point Mission at Melville Island, the Croker Island Mission, and St. Mary's Hostel at Alice Springs. The numbers of children attending these four institutions may be found in Appendix XXI.

The new Retta Dixon Home was opened by the Minister for Territories in July, 1961, and is conducted by the Aboriginal Inland Mission. The home, about four miles from Darwin, operates on a modified cottage system and replaces the old dormitory-style home which was situated within the Bagot Settlement area. The buildings consist of eight self-contained children's cottages, a superintendent's cottage, two labourers' cottages, office, infirmary, garage and workshops. The cottages are built of aluminium alloy and are lined with masonite. The home can accommodate up to 80 children and at 30th June, 1962, 57 were in residence, of whom four were working locally, 42 were attending primary schools and 11 were attending pre-school.

Garden Point Mission is conducted by the Roman Catholic Church and is situated on Melville Island, about 60 miles from Darwin. The mission operates on the dormitory system and about 130 children were accommodated during the year. Vocational training is available in carpentry, timber milling, agricultural and general labour projects for boys and in domestic arts for girls. Organized sport is available to the children and the mission has produced some first-grade footballers and athletes. During 1961-62 a new laundry unit was built and equipped, a new 5,000-gallon tank was installed and a new engine was purchased for the mission boat.

The Methodist Church conducts the Croker Island Mission at Croker Island off the north-west coast of Arnhem Land. Fifty children are accommodated there in self-contained cottages and are supervised by cottage mothers. The distribution of ages and sexes in each cottage is as close as possible to that of a normal family group and brothers and sisters are usually housed together. A modern school which follows the South Australian curriculum is conducted by the Education Branch of the Administration. Boys may also learn carpentry, sawmilling, and care of dairy cattle. Girls are taught domestic arts. A number of horses are kept on the mission for the leisure-time activities of the children.

At the age of 18 most children return for employment to the mainland, where the mission continues to keep in contact with them.

During the year a new superintendent's cottage containing an office and a radio room was built.

The mission is proposing to transfer children from Croker Island to Darwin, where it plans to build houses in which the children will be placed in the care of foster parents. Final details of this proposal are not yet available.

St. Mary's Hostel, three miles from Alice Springs, is conducted by the Church of England and accommodated an average of 66 boys and girls during the year. The children attended school in Alice Springs and were encouraged to join in the sporting and cultural life of the town. The hostel closes down during the Christmas school holiday period and where possible children return to their parents; otherwise arrangements are made for them to spend their vacation with temporary foster parents in South Australia. During the year a cottage was erected to accommodate the warden and his family.

*Part-Aboriginal Education Scheme.* The Government, in co-operation with the missions, transfers selected part-Aboriginal children to southern States for education. The children are placed in foster homes or boarding schools and a government subsidy of up to £300 a year is paid for each child, including £26 for child endowment.

During 1961-1962 two children were transferred to a boarding school in Victoria and a foster home in South Australia. At 30th June, 1962, there were 42 children being educated under the scheme. During the past two years the missions have had difficulty in obtaining suitable foster homes and the number of children transferred has fallen sharply. Two children were transferred, in 1961-62, compared with nine in 1960-61 and sixteen in 1959-60. All children studying under the scheme are reported to be doing well with their lessons. One young man is studying physiotherapy in England under the scheme.

*Erection of Hostels for Children and Young Workers.* During the year the Minister for Territories approved a loan to the Corporation of the Synod of the Diocese of Carpentaria to erect a hostel for young people attending schools in Darwin. A building to be known as the Carpentaria Junior Residential College is being built at Nightcliff and will accommodate 40 children of both sexes between 11 and 17 years of age.

1974

04608902

*Co-operation with State Authorities.* In accordance with the practice of recent years the Director of Child Welfare attended the Third Australasian Conference of the Administrators of Social Welfare, which was held in Tasmania in February, 1962. Subjects discussed which were of particular interest to the Northern Territory included:—training programmes for delinquent children; the appointment of voluntary probation officers; the separation of families in fostering arrangements, problems associated with mentally retarded and disturbed children; migrant children; State children moving interstate; foster parents transferred interstate; and cadet training schemes for welfare officers.

#### *Social and Family Welfare*

Welfare officers throughout the Northern Territory covered every aspect of social work during the year. Assistance is given to indigent persons for food and accommodation under Section 8 (f) of the *Welfare Ordinance 1953-1961*. The field work of welfare officers extends far beyond this assistance, however, and they are approached for guidance in many types of social and family difficulties including housing, employment, marital disharmony and desertion.

The 255 new cases recorded in Darwin and Alice Springs areas, together with those previously recorded, required 6,340 interviews by welfare officers in a wide range of personal and social maladjustments.

Remedial work is being attempted with families in sub-standard housing areas in Darwin and Alice Springs and co-operation has been sought from voluntary organizations.

In the Winnellie area of Darwin, a play centre was opened to keep children occupied and off the streets. The co-operation of parents is being sought to help run the centre.

The medical-social worker at the Darwin Hospital contributed to the efficient and expeditious handling of medical cases.

The number of single men arriving in the Territory destitute and without prospects of work appears to be increasing and during the wet season workers from outlying stations may require accommodation. During the year the Red Cross Society opened a hostel for unemployed men which will help relieve part of this problem.

Many of the people receiving assistance were destitute families without a male bread-winner, and pension and other social service benefits were arranged for them. In many cases the mothers are unmarried. Children are brought before the Children's Court only in extreme cases of neglect so that they can be taken into the care of the Branch.

*Alcoholics Anonymous* helped in every way possible in dealing with alcoholics. One man was sent to a southern institution during the year for treatment, as no rehabilitative medical treatment is available for such cases in the Territory.

The Northern Territory is dependent on the various State and church authorities for the accommodation and care of mental defectives, alcoholics and delinquent State children. Because of commitments undertaken by such authorities within their own States, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find accommodation for people from the Northern Territory who need institutional care; even when accommodation is available, transport costs are very high.

#### *Voluntary Agencies*

Prisoners' Aid Societies have been formed at Darwin and Alice Springs and such organizations as the Red Cross and the Country Women's Association, as well as the various church and mission organizations also carry out social welfare functions.

*Grants for Welfare, Cultural and Sporting Activities.* Grants totalling £10,600 were made to a wide range of community organizations on a pound-for-pound basis under the scheme instituted in 1957-58.

*Emergency Housekeeper Service.* Emergency housekeeper services in Darwin and Alice Springs are similar to services in other States. The organizations are run by committees of representatives of the various women's associations in the two centres and at Darwin the Red Cross Society provides secretarial services to the committee. Both committees are subsidized by the Government and during 1961-62 subsidies of £2,000 and £1,000 were paid to the Darwin and Alice Springs committees respectively.

The Darwin and Alice Springs Home-help Associations were established in late June, 1961, and started effective operations in July, 1961. During the early part of the year the demand was small, but as the activities became more widely known the demand increased greatly. During the year the service was made available to 35 households in Darwin and to 18 households in Alice Springs.

#### *Homes for Aged Persons*

The Australian Inland Mission conducts an Old Timers' Home at Alice Springs and the Australian Red Cross Society conducts an Old Timers' Home at Katherine and an Old People's Home at Tennant Creek. Both organizations have obtained assistance from the Commonwealth under the *Aged Persons Homes Act 1954-1957*.

## CHAPTER 18

### WELFARE OF ABORIGINES

#### *Aboriginal Population*

Total recorded Aboriginal population of the Northern Territory at 31st December, 1961, was 18,270.

Over the past five years the average annual increase in the population has been 17.7 per thousand.

#### *Policy and Legislation*

The policy of the Commonwealth Government is to promote and direct social change among Aborigines in the Territory in such a way that they will participate equally with all other Australians in community affairs and have equal opportunities to enter the same occupations, adopt a similar manner of life, and enjoy the same standards of living whilst still retaining connexions with and pride in their Aboriginal ancestry. This programme of assimilation involves the co-operation of other Australians in accepting Aborigines into the community, and of the Aborigines themselves in entering fully into the Australian way of life.

The legislative basis for this policy is provided in the *Welfare Ordinance 1953-1961*. Sweeping changes were made to the Ordinance during the year, generally by reducing the authority of the Director of Welfare over the liberty and property of wards and transferring the powers surrendered to the Courts. The basic principle of the Ordinance, however—that Aborigines considered capable of managing their own affairs without assistance are not brought under any special measure of control—still stands.

The Welfare Ordinance provides the statutory authority and fixes statutory responsibility on the Director of Welfare for work relating to the Welfare of Aborigines. Ancillary legislation—the *Wards Employment Ordinance 1953-1960* sets out the Director's responsibilities in relation to employment of Aborigines who are wards under the Welfare Ordinance.

Regulations made under these Ordinances require, in the main, the performance of certain acts by persons outside the Public Service. The Director of Welfare has a