

04246004

36

children under his care. Of the 25 committed during the year five were sent to institutions in southern states and the remainder were placed in institutions or foster homes in the Northern Territory.

*Receiving Homes.*—Two receiving homes, one at Darwin and one at Alice Springs, provide accommodation for children who may be charged as neglected or delinquent and children awaiting adoption or accommodation in foster homes, hostels or boarding schools. During the year 115 children were admitted to the Darwin home and 20 to the home at Alice Springs.

The first stage of construction at the new receiving home in Darwin was completed during the year. Built of brick, it provides dormitory accommodation for twelve children, staff quarters, dining-room, kitchen, laundry and extensive verandah space, and is equipped with modern equipment.

A house has been allocated in Darwin for the establishment of a separate receiving home for adolescent girls and young unmarried women.

*Adoptions.*—Adoption was arranged for several children during the year. Because of the lack of uniform legislation relating to adoption, procedural difficulties regularly arise where prospective foster parents reside outside the Northern Territory. The close co-operation maintained with State Child Welfare Departments, however, keeps such difficulties to a minimum.

*Institutions for Part-Aboriginal Children.*—Four homes, subsidized by the Government and conducted by various church bodies in close co-operation with the Welfare Branch, provide accommodation in training for part-aboriginal children. They are Retta Dixon Home conducted by the Aborigines Inland Mission on a section of Bagot Aboriginal Reserve, about four miles from Darwin; the Garden Point Mission conducted by the Roman Catholic Church at Melville Island; the Croker Island Mission conducted by the Methodist Overseas Mission at Croker Island off the north-west coast of Arnhem Land; and St. Mary's Hostel conducted by the Church of England at Alice Springs.

Construction of the new Retta Dixon Home which will be run on a modified cottage system is nearly complete. Buildings erected consist of eight children's cottages, a recreation hall, garage and workshop, and laundry clinic, supervisor's residence and two labourers' cottages. All dwellings are self-contained, bright, attractive and well-equipped and it is expected that they will be occupied by September, 1961. Of the children currently accommodated at the Home eleven attend pre-school, 45 primary school and three the Darwin High School, while five are in employment.

Garden Point Mission, which is run on the dormitory system, accommodated approximately 100 children ranging from infants to teenagers during the year under review. A new school building was completed and extensive plans are in hand to improve facilities generally. Vocational training is provided and several of the children who have entered the home are now gainfully employed there attending to the dairy herd, or as carpenters, mill hands or general labourers on current building projects. Some have married and established their own homes at the mission.

At Croker Island the children are accommodated in cottages under the supervision of cottage mothers and during 1960-61 there were 50 children in residence. A school, which follows the South Australian syllabus, was staffed and conducted throughout the year by the Education Branch of the Northern Territory Administration. Every effort is made to keep in touch with the children after they leave the mission and on many occasions arrangements for employment and accommodation have been made through the local mission headquarters for those who decide to remain in Darwin.

Following discussions held during the year it has been agreed to transfer the home from Croker Island to Darwin and the Methodist Overseas Mission Board is to investigate the prospects of developing suitable facilities. The present intention is to maintain and extend the cottage system already operating at Croker Island by building individual housing units on blocks of land in various parts of the city.

During 1960-61 60 children were accommodated at St. Mary's Hostel, three miles from Alice Springs, and attended pre-schools and schools in the town. During the school holidays a number of them travelled interstate and were accommodated in foster homes. A comprehensive plan for the progressive development of the hostel with government finance was approved during the year. The plan involves the substitution of cottage-type accommodation for dormitory accommodation and is to be carried out in several stages.

*Education of Part-Aboriginal Children in Southern States.*—For several years the Welfare Branch has co-operated with churches and missions in the transfer of selected part-aboriginal children for education and training in the States, and 64 children were placed in foster homes or residential colleges between 1956 and 1961. In 1960-61 shortage of foster homes caused a reduction in the numbers selected and only nine could be placed.

Sixteen of the children assisted in this way have since married or are working unsupervised by the Branch; of the remainder, 32 were settled in South Australia, eight in Victoria, six in New South Wales, one in Queensland, and one in the Australian Capital Territory. Four have begun nursing training courses, one has become a telephonist and one a farm worker, two have been apprenticed, one is training as a kindergarten teacher and the rest are attending school.

*Erection of Hostels for Children and Young Workers.*—Several projects are under way under the scheme described in the 1959-60 report whereby the Government provides long-term loans at a low interest rate to mission groups and other church bodies to assist them in establishing and furnishing hostels and institutions for children and young people living away from home in connexion with their education, training or employment. One of these projects, which has already been referred to, is the conversion of the Retta Dixon Home for part-aboriginal children, for which an additional loan of £6,000 to the Aborigines Inland Mission was approved during the year, bringing the total approved loan for the project to £86,200.

Negotiations continued with the Bush Church Aid Society for the establishment of a hostel for school-age children, and at the end of the year land had been selected, a lease finalized, and plans prepared for erection of a hostel to accommodate approximately 50 children. The estimated cost of the building will be approximately £75,000.

Discussion took place with the Salvation Army and the Young Women's Christian Association regarding proposed hostels for young working persons in Darwin and Alice Springs respectively. Both organizations were able to select suitable areas of land for leasing and were in the process of completing plans for building at the end of the year.

Plans are also being prepared for the erection of hostel accommodation for boys attending the Catholic Boys' Secondary School, Darwin.

*Co-operation with State Authorities.*—In recent years a significant development which is expected to lead to a uniform approach to child welfare matters has been the convening of conferences attended by Directors of Child Welfare throughout the Commonwealth. Among the subjects discussed at the 1961 conference were the roles

1830