2314. Would you select those who, from one cause or another, exhibited more interest, and therefore would be presumably more competent to deal with the business?—I think so.

2315. The secretary, I presume, ought not to be a member?—I think not.

2316. And would you confer any greater powers upon the chairman than he already possesses?—The chairman, I may say, has never attended in a single instance, or acted since I have been upon the Board; the chairman is the Chief Secretary of the day, and he has never been at the Board or acted at all. When the Board has had to refer to the Chief Secretary it has been as Minister and not as chairman.

2317. Do you elect your own chairman?—A vice-chairman is elected; the Chief Secretary is chairman ex officio.

2318. How often do the Board meet?—Not less than once a month.

2319. Is there any occasional special meeting?—Frequently. Meetings have also on one or more occasions been held at night, when members were unable to attend during business hours.

2320. There is a power to appoint local committees; has that been exercised?—No, I think not. I have never heard of any such committee while I have been a member.

2321. In the expenditure of funds, we have heard of complaints occasioned apparently by the unnecessary embarrassment or unavoidable embarrassment attending the expenditure of public monies; do you think any real benefit would arise from advancing or impressing to the Board a certain sum for which they would have afterwards to account?—I think it would be a great advantage.

2322. At certain periods there must necessarily be an expenditure, laying in necessary stores at the most suitable times?—Exactly; if the money is not there the Board have to wait till they get the money, and then they have to buy stores at dearer times, when the roads are bad and the carriage heavier, and so on. And the Board would be just as liable to account for the money under the one system as the other?—I think so; it seems to me no more difficult for the matter to be kept in order than in any other Government department; it ought to be under the auditors like the others.

2323. You think, however, that the Board ought to be able to supply stores at the cheapest time?—Yes, there have been constant complaints that the flour was not bought till it was too dear, and the blankets could not be sent to the stations till the blacks were all half-dead with cold and so on.

2324. In the fact the black stations are much like the ordinary stations, they should get their stores at the cheapest time?—Yes, when they send down their wool and so on.

2325. In fact the black stations are much like the ordinary stations, they should get their stores at the cheapest time?—Yes. I think so. I think the members of the Board, from their position, and from their visiting the stations, know better the wants of the stations, and therefore is better able to buy?—Yes; of course I only look at the matter from the most suitable times?—Exactly; if the money is not there the Board have to wait till they get the money, and then they have to buy stores at dearer times, when the roads are bad and the carriage heavier, and so on.

2326. It has also been suggested that comparatively a small sum should be advanced to each manager; he has small expenses, tools broken and other things have to be supplied, and if they are not furnished the work is stopped?—I think there is that necessity, and he ought, I think, also to have something at his disposal for wages to the natives.

2327. So as to pay them promptly too?—To get them to work by paying them a small wage, which when tried has been found very advantageous in dealing with them; they will not work if they are to get absolutely nothing for it; but if they get even a shilling or two a week they work pretty well.

2328. Do you think any special advantage results from prompt payment at once; if the promise is made and ultimately performed is there any difference?—With the blacks I do not think that prompt payment has been exercised too long; and the usual precautions taken by the Government in money matters should I think be extended to the local expenditure on the stations.

2329. Do you think any convenience would arise from those advances, the manager accounting in the usual way afterwards?—I think so. The same steps could be taken by the secretary in Melbourne that are taken by the Under Secretary in reference to my department for instance. The managers of course would require to be drilled into a little, but they would soon get into it; every police sergeant sends in far more complicated returns than they would be required to make.

2330. Do you think it would be necessary for managers to give security for the amount advanced?—I think so.

2331. An amount of security proportioned to the amount that would pass through their hands at any given time?—Yes.

2332. Of course if the cash advanced is small the security would be small?—Yes. I think the secretary, would he be regarded as a mere clerk—got to speak of it invincibly—or ought he also to possess certain power as supervisor of the different stations?—I think he ought to visit and report to the Board.

2333. Would you give him any special power?—No; he would advise the managers, and if they did not take his advice he would report to the Board, and they would decide what should be done; but I do not think he should have further power than that.

2334. Has the vice-chairman a casting vote as well as an ordinary vote?—I am not aware.

2335. There is no provision for that in the Act?—I think not.

2336. You have at present exemption from certain regulations, such as the store and transport regulations; you can buy your own stores at any time, and direct from the tradesmen?—Yes, that we do.

2337. You think that that should be continued?—Yes, certainly; but there was an effort made to compel the Board to return to the Government contractor, but the secretary found that he could get stores cheaper elsewhere, and he bought them.

2338. Was that sanctioned by the Government?—Yes; of course I only look at the matter from the side of the Board. I have nothing to do with the penal establishment; that is a different view of the case.

2339. The Board, from their position, and from their visiting the stations, knows better the wants of the stations, and therefore is better able to buy?—Yes, just so. I think no one—the secretary, or any one else—could visit one of those places without learning something that would be useful. I think the members of the Board ought to see those stations occasionally.

2340. Ten have seen all the stations yourself?—No, not all of them; I have not seen those in Gippsland, I have seen the three to the westward, and Coranderrk.

2341. In reference to that it was that the question was asked whether it might be desirable to give the secretary power to give certain directions. He might see certain small things in which, from his experience, he might give valuable directions?—If he were to give provisional directions on small matters his doing so would be an advantage.

2342. But it would destroy the uniformity of the operation of the Board to have a fully exercising authority who would give directions?—I think it would were he to be allowed to do more than you have just proposed. In a general way, since I have been a member, the Board has exercised but little authority over

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2346. But it would destroy the uniformity of the operation of the Board to have a fully exercising authority who would give directions?—I think it would were he to be allowed to do more than you have just proposed. In a general way, since I have been a member, the Board has exercised but little authority over
those stations which are under the care of missionaries, nor has it found occasion to do so up to this time. Experience, however, has led me, and perhaps others, to the conclusion that the management of some of them is very faulty; for instance, we got a requisition the other day from Lake Condah station for meat; the cattle at that station being, we are told, too poor to kill. Now this should not have happened at Condah, a fine country; but with all the labor on it, it has not yet been fenced in. Other circumstances of the sort might be mentioned.

2344. That is a great obstacle to the provision of animal food at Condah, the absence of fencing?—Yes; Condah is a fine fattening country, and fully capable of supplying meat if properly managed. Up to this, in all these years, it has not yet been fenced. At our stations generally the labor power on them is but poorly availed of. With black labor in Queensland and New South Wales, stations have been managed, sheep washed, shrub, and lambed, fences erected, and so on, and this by far less civilized blacks, and far fewer of them. Our managers, in my opinion, are not energetic; they have in some cases built huts, houses, and churches, and knocked off work. It seems to me that the training of the blacks to work, teaching them the habit of labor, has not been kept in view. Primary works even have not been executed.

2345. Latterly have they not been improving in those respects, fencing at Coranderrk for instance?—I have not been there lately.

2346. Have you not reached the real spring of that in speaking of wages?—I have recommended that the industry of the people should be stimulated by low wages. Indeed this course has occasionally been adopted by the Board, and with excellent results. If properly used it is a great power in the hands of the manager. At Coranderrk, however, where labor has been more availed of than at some of the other stations, it has been represented last week to the Board that the two plough horses cannot be kept in condition for want of hay, oats, and grass. Now this I look on as ridiculous, not to use a severer term. Again, a selector who has our hands can fence in his farm, and why not the manager of an aboriginal station?—2347. In an economical point of view, you think there is room for improvement in the farming?—Decidedly. I should think it was difficult to find such farming anywhere else.

2348. And besides that you are improving and civilizing the men?—Yes.

2349. In regard to attendance or non-attendance at the Board, do you think that a provision that for non-attendance for a certain time a member should vacate the office would that work well?—Yes, I think so, especially if the number of members is limited.

2350. Non-attendance, except by arrangement satisfactory to the Board?—Yes, sometimes a person is unavailably sick. That will occur if a man is sick, and so on; in fact I do not think the line ought to be drawn too finely. I think if a man does not attend for six months, for instance, unless he is sick or something of that kind, it is plain he does not want to have anything to do with it.

2351. And by filling up vacancies in that way the whole number of the Board might reasonably be more limited?—I think six a very good number.

2352. Will you in revising the proof of your evidence add anything that may occur to you upon which we have not asked you questions?—I shall be very glad to do so.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned.

MEMO.

As the Royal Commission have asked me, in the course of my examination, what I would recommend, in respect of the future management of the 1,000 blacks still in this colony, I have thought it well to offer in short, at this stage, some additions to what I have already suggested on this subject.

To this end I will begin by remarking that when I first visited our aboriginal stations I was surprised and gratified to see the people whom a few years back I had known as wandering savages apparently brought within the pale of civilization. They had new churches, schools, and huts. They had learnt to read and write, and come to wear clothes and work a little or to go, and to enjoy all the good things provided by the State with the minimum of labor to themselves. On these grounds I feel convinced that no adequate further advance need be expected under the present system, and to meet the case would recommend as follows:

That the aboriginal reserves should, where necessary, be increased to such an extent as will enable the blacks to divide time to live by reasonable work on their produce, independently of Parliamentary aid; that the managers of such reserves should be appointed by and wholly dependent on the Board, any funds subscribed privately for the aborigines being dispensed by the Board. In offering this advice, however, I would guard the Commission from supposing that the removal of the present managers is recommended, as I believe many of them would be found to render valuable services under a better system and proper responsibility. I would also suggest that the salary of each manager should, to some extent, be made to depend on the prosperity of the station he managed.

In addition, I would recommend the appointment of a general manager, a considerable portion of whose time would be spent on the various stations, seeing that they were properly conducted in every respect. The general manager would, in my opinion, have a difficult duty to perform, and one as honorable as any under the Crown in this colony. He should, I think, be a first-class man, as very early experience convinced me that the blacks (even in their savage state) both clearly discriminated between the educated gentleman and others less fortunate, and that to the former they yielded readily an obedience and confidence (most beneficial to themselves) which the latter never succeeded in obtaining. On the proper choice of a general manager hung, in my opinion, the fate of the remnant of our black population.

From the measures which I have proposed, I shall anticipate, besides great advantage to the blacks, a considerable saving to the Treasury.

6th August 1877.

EDWARD M. CURR.
TUESDAY, 31st JULY 1877.

Present:
G. W. Rusden, Esq., J.P., in the Chair;
E. H. Cameron, Esq., M.L.A.;
F. R. Godfrey, Esq.
J. G. Duffy, Esq., M.L.A.

Mr. James Stewart Doons called and examined.

2353. How long have you been at Coranderrk?—Fifteen months.
2354. What has been the state of the health of the people there?—I think they have been in tolerably good health, with the exception of a few cases shortly after I arrived, through the damp, cold weather, principally—people with an affection in their lungs.
2355. Their general health is good now?—Their health is very good now. I think there is one man on the sick list; that is all.
2356. Is that lung disease increasing?—I think not; I think it is decreasing, if anything.
2357. Are there any held up by it now?—There is one I think, who caught cold when he was cutting the hop-poles, but he is I believe progressing very favorably.
2358. Have they expressed any desire to leave Coranderrk?—There are a few I think, but the majority wish to remain.
2359. Do you know from what parts of the colony those few that you speak of originally came?—I do not. I have not sufficient intercourse with them to know that. My attention is particularly directed to the children.
2360. Are the children in good health?—They are in capital health—I do not know a single case of sickness on the station.
2361. The orphans’ large building, with proper ventilation under the floor?—Yes.
2362. Is that the case at present with the huts?—They might be improved, but many a white person has a worse hut to live in.
2363. Have any of the children under your care complained of ailing from any disease?—No, not that I am aware of; they are very healthy at present.
2364. There are a number of half-castes amongst the children?—A great many.
2365. Are any whiter than half-castes?—Yes, decidedly.
2366. How many that you would consider quadroons?—About a dozen I should think.
2367. Any still—octrooons?—One or two I should think.
2368. How many children are there altogether?—There are forty-five on the school roll.
2369. Is yours a State school?—Yes, but not under the Board of Education, but under the Mining Department.
2370. Is your school officially inspected?—No, I have applied for that, and an inspector is expected, but he has not yet come.
2371. What I want to get at is how many of these children might be casually mistaken for white children?—I think there are only one or two who might be.
2372. How many of them could mix with white people without attracting observation as aborigines?
—Very, very few.
2373. How many do you think?—Well, I should have to think that well over.
2374. Take your time?—Amongst the orphans as well?
2375. On the station altogether?—I think that there may be a dozen that are nearly quadroons.
2376. Who might be taken, say, for southern Europeans?—Yes, decidedly.
2377. What ages are they?—From six to twelve I should think.
2378. You have applied for the school to be inspected?—Yes. An inspector called once, and expressed himself pleased, but he did not give in any regular report of results. He was passing through the district, and merely called, and I then expressed a wish for an inspector to come.
2379. Are you troubled much with visitors?—No; in the summer time we have a few, but not any in the winter.
2380. Is your work on the station interfered with by so many visiting?—Not at all; of course if they happen to come into the schoolroom the school is interrupted for a short time.
2381. Have you ever noticed anyone taking away young girls from the station?—Never.
2382. If you did, you would have interfered?—Of course I should have informed the superintendent at once of anything of the sort, though that is not part of my duty.
2383. What means are adopted to prevent that?—The girls are very strictly watched by the matron, Mrs. Halliday. They are continually under her charge except when they are with me in the school.
2384. When is the matron always there?—When she is away I think the place is locked up. They are secure as there is no way of their getting out, excepting the few who are at work doing their various domestic work that is required to keep the place in order; they have to run in and out, but they are continually under her watch.
2385. Their general health is good now?—Their health is very good now. I think there is one man on the sick list; that is all.
2386. Is that lung disease increasing?—I think not; I think it is decreasing, if anything.
2387. Are there any laid up by it now?—There is one I think, who caught cold when he was cutting the hop-poles, but he is I believe progressing very favorably.
2388. Have they expressed any desire to leave Coranderrk?—There are a few I think, but the majority wish to remain.
2389. Do you know from what parts of the colony those few that you speak of originally came?—I do not. I have not sufficient intercourse with them to know that. My attention is particularly directed to the children.
2390. Are the children in good health?—They are in capital health—I do not know a single case of sickness on the station.
2391. Are Mrs. Halliday’s daughters, from their position, able to exercise a kind of influence—In that way they exercise a beneficial influence you think?—I think it naturally must do, considering that they live with them and make themselves very sociable with them.
2392. Is there any arrangement made to have them with the native-girls, running in and out of the schoolroom.
2393. Is there any arrangement made to have them with the native-girls, running in and out of the schoolroom.
2394. They are not employed or have any sort of authority?—They have continual intercourse.
2395. Do they not sleep in the schoolroom with them?—Yes, they do.
2396. In that way they exercise a beneficial influence you think?—I think it naturally must do, considering that they live with them and make themselves very sociable with them.
2397. You say they are locked up; suppose the matron is away all day?—I have never known Mrs. Halliday to be away excepting on Sunday. It is then they are locked up; Mrs. Halliday has one.
2398. Have you ever noticed anyone taking away young girls from the station?—Never.
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Mr. J. S. Deana,

2397. Have you ever known these girls locked up for a whole day?—Never. I have known them locked up sometimes for the afternoon, during Mrs. Halliday's absence on a Sunday afternoon; but only on a Sunday afternoon.

2398. Is it because they are afraid they will go away and wander about?—Yes, I should think they decidedly would do so. I do not think, if I may be allowed an opinion, that they should be allowed to wander during the matron's absence—that they should be left at large.

2399. You have never known any instances of improper conduct since you have been there?—Never the least.

2400. Has a medical man visited the station lately?—I think it must be two or three months since he was there. There has been no occasion to require him that I am aware of.

2401. Do you know whether the medical practitioner who visited ever complained that it was against the health of the natives to be locked up in the room for a portion of the day?—No, I never heard anything of the kind.

2402. Did anyone else?—Yes; Mr. Mackie called one Sunday to conduct service, and it was during Mr. Halliday's absence, and the girls were locked up, and I mentioned it; he called at my place and asked if Mr. and Mrs. Halliday were in, and I said "No:" and also at the same time he asked if he could get into the school, and I said he could, and left it to himself whether he liked to conduct service or not. At that time I mentioned to him about the children that they were locked up in the school, and he spoke to me about it.

2403. Mrs. Halliday had not the key with her?—I had one, she had the other. I am obliged to have one because I have the Sunday school. I can always go there, and during that time I am held responsible for anything that might occur.

2404. She always tells you when she does that?—No; the key is sent to me in the morning so that I can let the children out of their sleeping-room and take them to the schoolroom. I am responsible for them till the return of Mrs. Halliday.

2405. Do I understand that the children are always under lock and key?—Oh, certainly not; I am only talking of when Mrs. Halliday is away—it is only in regard to the door that I have the key and that I am speaking of.

2406. They are not kept like prisoners?—No, decidedly not. I said on certain occasions they were kept like prisoners.

2407. Did Mr. Mackie wait?—No, he came back in the evening.

2408. Does he visit the station regularly?—At first he attended every month regularly, and then for a few occasions afterwards every fortnight; but now I believe he has altered his plans again for every month.

2409. Are many of the aborigines away from the station at present?—I only know of one man, who came down by coach to day; he is leaving to go to Echuca.

2410. Has he got a pass?—I suppose so.

2411. How many did you say were desirous of leaving Coranderrk?—I could not say—it is principally by hearsay—a few said so, but it is more by what I learnt; I think it is very few. Especially the old men who have been a long time in the district, they wish to remain.

2412. From your observation during the time you have been there do you think there is much difficulty in keeping the intruders away from the place, such as idlers or larrikins?—I hardly understand you: do you mean visitors?

2413. They might pretend to be visitors?—I never saw any visitors except most respectable people.

2414. Have you ever heard anything about the young population of Healesville visiting there—young lads about fifteen?—No, I never heard anything of the kind.

2415. Have you ever seen or known anything of the sort?—No, never.

2416. You think it is as safe from people of that sort as if twenty miles from Healesville?—I do not say that. I think that Healesville offers many inducements for them to go into the township. I have no doubt if the station were further away it might be beneficial for them in many respects.

2417. That is theoretically, but practically you know of no instances of inconvenience?—Not as regards the young people. Of course it is known that men occasionally get drunk at Healesville, which is one of the results of the township being near the station, but not more so than would occur in any white population, with a certain class of people. I think, as a rule, they are a very steady lot of men. There are one or two exceptions, men that will get drunk if they possibly can, but never to cause any serious disturbance.

2418. What are your hours of teaching?—From 10 to 12 and 2 to 4, and evening schools for the lads that are not able to attend, twice a week. I started it three times, but they would not attend.

2419. Do they attend well now?—I never have more than six.

2420. What is your experience of the intellect of the aborigines as regards their capacity for receiving instruction?—I think they are quite as intelligent as the average class of white children, and I should be glad for the inspector to compare them with the white children at Healesville.

2421. And what books do you use?—The same as used under the Board of Education.

2422. What is your experience with regard to those that have left school, and have started for themselves—do they keep up their knowledge?—I think they will gradually fall away from it decidedly; they seem to take no interest after they leave; they have no liking for reading at all.

2423. They do not keep up their instruction?—No. I used to give them books for prizes, but they never cared for them.

2424. There is no compulsion as regards their attendance at school?—Yes, compulsion in this respect; I have stated to the parents that unless they attended I should have to report them.

2425. What class of people attended the night-school?—The lads who were working during the day.

2426. What ages?—From 15 to 18.

2427. Lads working on the station during the day?—Yes.

2428. Do you find the parents as a rule desirous to send their children to school?—Very.

2429. So that compulsion is not required?—No.

2430. With regard to religious instruction, you conduct service I believe on Sunday?—Yes.


2432. In the morning, or when?—In the morning and evening during the summer; the morning only during the winter.

2433. And the Sunday school as well?—Yes.

* Since giving my evidence, I remember a circumstance in connection with question No. 2414, viz. At a dance which took place about three months ago, some young men from Healesville were present. N.B.—This quite escaped my memory at the time I gave my evidence.—J. S. DEANN.
so much wet and snow right down to the camp. We were six weeks cutting poles, and there was rain every day.

I read passages from the Bible, and explain them. I find that is the best. I have avoided

but the generality of them do not.  

will go to ruin, and they do not want him to go away. I have heard that amongst the people themselves.

allowed to go. His name is Dick. He is thirteen years of age—an active and useful lad—and they think he

think it is change of climate; I think it is the shearing is coming on, and they want to earn money.

Mooney, and Dan Hall.

1872 I think.

2470. Are those single men ?-Married.

2466. Had he a pass ?-I cannot say.

2467. Is he a married man ?-No, he is quite a young lad. He has been away before. He is not going to stay away this time.

2468. Do any of those who have been any length of time at Coranderrk wish to go away?—Sambo, Mooney, and Dan Hall.

2469. How long have they been there ?—Dan Hall has been twelve years ; Sambo and Mooney since

1872 I think.

2470. Are those single men ?—Married.

2471. What part of the country do they come from ?—Echuca way.

2472. Do you know what their motive for wanting to go is—change of climate, or what ?—I do not think it is change of climate; I think it is the shearing is coming on, and they want to earn money.

2473. And they want to leave their wife and children at the station ?—I do not know.

2474. When you say they are anxious to go, do you mean they are discontented with the station ?—

2475. They have been away before ?—Yes, and returned again.

2476. When they went away before, did they leave their families at Coranderrk ?—Yes.

2477. Did they ever send any money to them while they were away ?—I did not hear of any.

2478. Do they rebel against the authorities now at Coranderrk ?—Some of the men have something now.

2479. How long has he been there ?—Ever since the year 1870.

2480. Do the aborigines complain of the cold now ?—No, they seem to take more interest.

2481. Has this been a cold winter ?—Yes, up there; I have not seen such a cold winter for five years—so much wet and snow right down to the camp. We were six weeks cutting poles, and there was rain every day.

2482. And yet there has been less sickness ?—Yes; only the two.

2483. Do you notice any immorality going on about the station P—No, I have not seen any.

2484. Have you ever seen any on the station ?—No, never on the station.

2485. Do the natives attend both the services and the Sunday school ?—Yes, the native children regularly attend school, but the adults service only.

2486. And besides your services, Mr. Mackie comes there at certain intervals ?—Yes, once a month.

2487. Does he conduct the Church of England services ?—No, the Presbyterian.

2488. Some belong to one denomination and some to the other?—I do not know that; they go to both services.

2489. Are there any other services of other religious denominations held there ?—No.

2490. The Moravians have no mission there ?—No.

2491. Do they sing with equal zest at both the services ?—Yes, they take a very great interest in

the singing.

2492. Do you teach them any dogma ?—No.

2493. The Church of England catechism ?—Yes, they learn portions of it occasionally. I chiefly

read passages from the Bible, and explain them. I find that is the best. I have avoided the catechism,
because it is absurd to talk to them about godfathers and godmothers, and so on.

2494. Are they not baptised in any way ?—Not that I am aware of.

2495. As far as you are concerned, you confine your teaching to explaining the broad principles of the Bible ?—Yes, I find that interests them more than any other subject. Catechism they take no interest in.

2496. You avoid technicalities and intricacies—?—Yes.

2497. You were on the station at the time of hop-picking ?—Yes, the whole time.

2498. How were the blacks paid ?—I believe the same as the white men and the Chinamen who were working there.

2499. By the day or by the bushel ?—By the bushel; but I do not know the rate.

2500. Had you an opportunity of seeing them during that time ?—Very seldom.

2501. You do not know whether they were as energetic in the work as the whites or Chinese—able to compete with them ?—A few might have been, but I think as a rule they were not as active.

2502. There are some young girls in the school of about 15 or 16—are there not ?—Yes.

2503. And have been since you have been there ?—Yes.

2504. Have any of those girls gone wrong in any way ?—Not that I am aware of. I have never seen any instance of immorality of any kind.

2505. And since you have been there some of them have been married to black fellows on the place ?—Yes.

2506. Do you think that they conduct themselves in their homes ?—Yes ; some of them I think are very happy.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. Thomas Harris examined.

2507. What is your occupation ?—Farm overseer at Coranderrk.

2508. How long have you been there ?—Over fourteen years.

2509. How many aborigines are at Coranderrk just now ?—I do not know to one or two, but I think there were about 125 when we last took the numbers, and there are three dead since then.

2510. Any births ?—No births since.

2511. Are they as a rule healthy now ?—There is not much complaining now. There are just two sick with cold, one through being cut hop-pole cutting.

2512. There are not so many complaining as there were two years ago ?—That is the only two now.

2513. Did not one of those suffer before with his lungs ?—He did.

2514. Are any of them anxious to leave the station ?—Three have been to Mr. Halliday lately.

2515. One came up with you in the coach today ?—Yes—Bobby Bius— I think he is going to Mr. Macbain's station.

2516. Do any of those who have been any length of time at Coranderrk wish to go away ?—Sambo, Mooney, and Dan Hall.

2517. How long have they been there ?—Dan Hall has been twelve years; Sambo and Mooney since

1872 I think.

2518. Are those single men ?—Married.

2519. What part of the country do they come from ?—Echuca way.

2520. Do you know what their motive for wanting to go is—change of climate, or what ?—I do not think it is change of climate; I think it is the shearing is coming on, and they want to earn money.

2521. And they want to leave their wife and children at the station ?—I do not know.

2522. When you say they are anxious to go, do you mean they are discontented with the station ?—Sambo went away before, and came back with nothing.

2523. They have been away before ?—Yes, and returned again.

2524. When they went away before, did they leave their families at Coranderrk ?—Yes.

2525. Did they ever send any money to them while they were away ?—I did not hear of any.

2526. Do they rebel against the authorities now at Coranderrk ?—Some of the men have something now.

2527. Do you know whether they have been to Mr. Halliday. They said that Sambo's wife's son should not be allowed to go. His name is Dick. He is thirteen years of age—an active and useful lad—and they think he will go to ruin, and they do not want him to go away. I have heard that amongst the people themselves.

2528. How long has he been there ?—Ever since the year 1870.

2529. Do the aborigines complain of the cold now ?—No, only just those three. I have heard them, but the generality of them do not.

2530. Has this been a cold winter ?—Yes, up there; I have not seen such a cold winter for five years—so much wet and snow right down to the camp. We were six weeks cutting poles, and there was rain every day.

2531. And yet there has been less sickness ?—Yes; only the two.

2532. Do you notice any immorality going on about the station ?—No, I have not seen any.

2533. Have you ever seen any on the station ?—No, never on the station.

Mr. J. S. Dunn, 
Mr. Thomas Harris, 31st July 1877.
Mr. Thos. Harris, 2486. You think they are well conducted?—They are well conducted so far, but the games that they play after hours amongst themselves, such as card-playing, and such like as that.

2487. How do you account for there being so many half-castes then?—All the half-castes that are there came with the mothers.

2488. They are not natives of Coranderrk?—No; except one, Aleck, a little lad, whose mother came there about three weeks before she was confined. That is the only one that is unmarried on the station.

2489. But there are one or two married women of light color?—Yes.

2490. I suppose, having lived so long on the station, you would have seen or known if there was any great amount of immorality going on there?—Yes; I have never seen any. I would have seen it if it had been on the station.

2491. Did you hear of any reports of immorality?—I heard of one man selling his wife for a bottle of brandy. That is the only one.

2492. Was that that?—Many years ago, when Mr. Taylor was there.

2493. Have you heard that young people are in the habit of going out and meeting young people from Healesville in an improper way?—I have never heard or saw it.

2494. You do not believe in the truth of such reports?—No.

2495. Do you know any case there in which the parents are black and have had a white child, or even a half-caste child?—No, I cannot point to one.

2496. And have any of the young people had children without being married?—There was only one case in connection with one of the officials, who was dismissed for it.

2497. How long was that ago?—It must have been more than four years ago.

2498. Did you not suspect some immorality on that occasion?—Not before it was found out.

2499. When it was found out?—The person who used to take charge of the rooms where the girls slept used to sleep in some other part, and this young man used to go and put the key at the window, and the girl took the key and went out to him in the night. That was how it was found out.

2500. Was he turned away?—Yes.

2501. But you stated just now that you knew of no instances of immorality, and here is one that turns up—can you think of any other?—No; none that I remember.

2502. Was the child a half-caste?—I never saw it; it was dead.

2503. Are the young men about Healesville in the habit of visiting the station?—At hop-picking time there were, as they have some dancing and a brass band.

2504. But they are not in the habit of coming at late hours?—Not that I am aware of, and I am out pretty late.

2505. On Sundays do they come?—Yes; on Sundays they are sometimes about, and our people over there are pretty well inside on that day, but I know some of our young men go to Healesville. Whether the Healesville young men come out to the place I could not say.

2506. You have been farm overseer all the time you have been there?—Yes.

2507. Do you consider that the cattle have increased on the station as much as they should have done?—Well, it takes two head of cattle to kill a week to supply the station, and has for the last three years.

2508. Are they all supplied from the station?—There have not been sufficient cows this year to allow the increase, so they have not been. Forty-three I think there were branded this last year.

2509. Has it always been done in that way?—Yes, except when Mr. Halliday is there to mark down while I brand.

2510. Is Briggs's son at the station now?—Yes.

2511. A few months would make a great hole in the fencing?—Yes, no doubt.

2512. Who superintends that?—Mr. Halliday.

2513. Do the blacks work with you at the kiln?—No, not if they are heavier.

2514. Would it be possible to fence it with the natives?—It would take too much time.

2515. Do the blacks work with you at the hop garden?—They are not occupied all the year.

2516. Do you manage the hop garden under your superintendence?—No. I have been in the hop garden (but not in charge) the last fortnight because the men refused to work under Edgar.

2517. Are they paid by the bushel or the day for picking hops?—By the bushel.

2518. How much?—Threepence.

2519. Do they get through as much work as the white men or Chinamen employed?—Yes; I think there were some who did.

2520. Do they average as much?—No, not all; some picked better than others.

2521. Could you say whether the aborigines on the place or any other laborers—Chinese or European—picked the most of the hops?—I could not say.

2522. Were you much in the hop garden?—No; I only visited it twice. I was principally at the hop kiln.

2523. Do the blacks work with you at the kiln?—No, a white man.

2524. Have you been accustomed to fencing work at all?—Yes, in my earlier days I was—not lately.

2525. Do you think there are some blacks who could assist in the fencing if you instructed them?—I could pick out six or eight very good fencers there.

2526. A few months would make a great hole in the fencing?—Yes, no doubt.

2527. Is Briggs's son at the station now?—Yes.

2528. Does he work?—He does not regularly.

2529. Who superintends that?—Mr. Halliday.

2530. Do the blacks work with you at the hop garden?—No; I only visited it twice. I was principally at the hop kiln.

2531. How often do you brand the cattle?—Every six months.

2532. Who superintends that?—Mr. Halliday.

2533. Has it always been done in that way?—Yes, except when Mr. Green was there. He used to brand, and one of the young lads used to do the marking, and the boys assisted.

The witness withdraw.  Adjourned.
### APPENDICES.

#### APPENDIX A.

**Census Return of the Aboriginal Natives in the Colony of Victoria on the 15th day of March 1877.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Mixed Blood</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coranderrk</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Condah</td>
<td>13</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Hindmarsh</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framlingham</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Tyers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Wellington</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Werridongbeal</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Sale</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulupna</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>311</td>
<td>746</td>
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| Total Males | 627 | 633 |
| Total Females | 837 | 844 |

- **Note:** The numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number.
### APPENDIX B.

#### ABORIGINAL STATIONS.

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<th>Name of Station</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Superintendent</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Ramahyuck, or Lake Wellington</td>
<td>Near Lake Wellington, Gipps Land</td>
<td>The Rev. F. A. Hagenauer</td>
<td>Presbyterian Mission Station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Tyers</td>
<td>At Lake Tyers, Gipps Land</td>
<td>The Rev. John Bulmer</td>
<td>Church of England Mission Station.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Framlingham</td>
<td>Near Warrnambool</td>
<td>Mr. W. Goodall, jun.</td>
<td>Exclusively under the Board.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coranderrk</td>
<td>Near Healesville</td>
<td>Mr. H. H. Halliday</td>
<td>Exclusively under the Board.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name of Station</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Superintendent</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<td>86</td>
<td>Presbyterian Mission Station.</td>
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<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Church of England Mission Station.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
| 59 | Exclusively under the Board.
| 85 | Church of England Mission Station. |
| 65 | Moravian Mission Station. |
| 145 | Exclusively under the Board. |
| 527 | Exclusively under the Board. |
APPENDIX C.

PART I. (PAGES 98 to 115).—CERTAIN CORRESPONDENCE, VIZ.:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Remarks</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Rev. F. W. Speereke</td>
<td>Offering suggestions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15th Feb.</td>
<td>The Secretary to the Commissioners</td>
<td>Offering suggestions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>28th</td>
<td>J. Baleon, Esq., Local Guardian of Aborigines, Casterton</td>
<td>Stating his views regarding the treatment of the aborigines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>28th</td>
<td>J. Dawson, Esq.</td>
<td>Circular to local guardians inviting information or suggestions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>19th</td>
<td>Sergeant L. Fawcett, ditto</td>
<td>Circular to local guardians inviting information or suggestions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>22nd</td>
<td>J. H. Jackson, Esq., ditto</td>
<td>Circular to local guardians inviting information or suggestions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3rd March</td>
<td>P. Learmonth, Esq., ditto</td>
<td>Circular to local guardians inviting information or suggestions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>C. M. Officer, Esq., ditto</td>
<td>Circular to local guardians inviting information or suggestions.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>17th</td>
<td>C. Warner-Connell, Esq., P.M., ditto</td>
<td>Circular to local guardians inviting information or suggestions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>14th</td>
<td>J. N. McLeod, Esq., ditto</td>
<td>Circular to local guardians inviting information or suggestions.</td>
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<td>22nd</td>
<td>Dr. W. T. Molony, ditto</td>
<td>Circular to local guardians inviting information or suggestions.</td>
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<td>S. H. Officer, Esq., ditto</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>8th April</td>
<td>A. McEdward, Esq., Honorary Correspondent, Mildura</td>
<td>Circular to local guardians inviting information or suggestions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>J. Miller, Esq., Local Guardian of Aborigines, Ralston</td>
<td>Circular to local guardians inviting information or suggestions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>14th</td>
<td>The Secretary to the Commissioners</td>
<td>Circular to local guardians inviting information or suggestions.</td>
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<td>Ditto</td>
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<td>19th</td>
<td>P. Turner, Esq., Local Guardian of Aborigines, Wangwara</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>30th April</td>
<td>J. Dawson, Esq., ditto</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>30th May</td>
<td>A. Dennis, Esq., ditto</td>
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<td>Dr. T. Bush, New</td>
<td>Circular to local guardians inviting information or suggestions.</td>
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<td>19th</td>
<td>C. Gray, Esq., Local Guardian of Aborigines, Numunnum</td>
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<td>26th</td>
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<td>P. Learmonth, Esq., ditto</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>4th May</td>
<td>J. Baleon, Esq., ditto</td>
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<tr>
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<td>J. Finley, Esq., Honorary Correspondent, Tawamburra</td>
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<td>Mr. H. H. Halfpenny, Superintendent Aboriginal Station, Casterton</td>
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<tr>
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<td>27th April</td>
<td>B. Morgan, Esq., Honorary Correspondent, Wirrimondale</td>
<td>Circular to local guardians inviting information or suggestions.</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<td>J. Mackenzie, Esq., ditto</td>
<td>Circular to local guardians inviting information or suggestions.</td>
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<td>P. Beveridge, Esq., Local Guardian of Aborigines, French Island</td>
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PART II. (PAGE 116 et seq.).

SYNOPSIS OF ANSWERS TO THE LIST OF QUESTIONS FORWARDED BY CIRCULAR OF 14TH APRIL.

Note.—Replies to the printed questions by the Rev. M. Macdonald, on behalf of the Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church, by Mr. W. E. Morris, Honorary Secretary to the Church of England Mission to the Aborigines, and by Mr. J. Green, will be found in the evidence of those gentlemen respectively.

Aborigines.
CHARLEMONT HOUSE, CONNEWARRA, GEELONG, 24th FEBRUARY 1876.

GENTLEMEN,

Having seen much of the Australian aboriginal race in all stages of their progress and decay under their past government, and having for some time taken a considerable interest in this race and their management, I have the honor to forward for the consideration of the Commission a report on the future treatment of the aboriginal race in Victoria.

Gentlemen,

Having seen much of the Australian aboriginal race in all stages of their progress and decay under their past government, and having for some time taken a considerable interest in this race and their management, I have the honor to forward for the consideration of the Commission a report on the future treatment of the aboriginal race in Victoria.

The system pursued by Governments of regularly doling out gifts to blacks, while nothing further is done to improve them permanently or draw them from their savage and nomadic life, is almost as mistaken in its ultimate effects on ignorant barbarians as the too long-continued employment of force and terror only, for, like all other paupers when only treated as such, they soon learn to do nothing but beg, and, acquiring a taste for ardent spirits, they quickly run to a rapid and fatal end.

The South Australian Register of 10th April 1876, in furnishing the précis of a report from the S.A. Sub-Inspector of Aborigines, states that much is being done to ameliorate the condition of the aborigines under the South Australian Government, and that these efforts are not to be relaxed, but that, in some instances, the field of usefulness is even to be extended. The report adds that a reserve of 600 square miles has been set apart by the South Australian Government for those natives who have become permanently fixed on the extent of land which is being devoted to this purpose.

But, good as this concession undoubtedly is, it stops short in its real and practical utility. If the country so set aside can be really bad, then it is a poor gift, and of the least benefit; but if it be even poorer, it is worse. It is an absurdity to suppose that the aborigines who were themselves workers, and who have been receiving no assistance from the officer whose authority they declined to obey, while those who remained steady in residence received and are now receiving, such local benefits as the S.A. Government is doing for them, if they are going to be obliged to reside on a station by any coercion, they would soon learn that those who continued to roam at large would have none of the advantages which the settlement brings with it.

It may be objected that it would be too much power to give a man, to constitute him a magistrate with power to clothe, and reward the diligent and industrious. To be fully efficient in governing blacks such an officer should be appointed a head of cattle, and, in doing so, we would not only have the unanimous support and concurrence of all civilized races, but also of every soul and small interest that is concerned.

The system pursued by Governments of regularly doling out gifts to blacks, while nothing further is done to improve them permanently or draw them from their savage and nomadic life, is almost as mistaken in its ultimate effects on ignorant barbarians as the too long-continued employment of force and terror only, for, like all other paupers when only treated as such, they soon learn to do nothing but beg, and, acquiring a taste for ardent spirits, they quickly run to a rapid and fatal end.

To save blacks effectually, reserves should be granted to them consisting of as good country, and in blocks of as large a size, as can fairly be procured.

Some reserves should, if possible, not be much under a carrying capacity of from 3,000 to 4,000 head of cattle, and from 3,000 to 4,000 sheep each; and each such run might be commenced with not less than 1,000 head of cattle, and 600 sheep. Five such runs, when fully stocked, would be a self-supporting, and should maintain all the blacks at present in Victoria. And yet, as seen by the system pursued elsewhere, for the maintenance of the whole aboriginal race of this colony. The Victorian Government has adopted a kind of half measures towards this end, and yet under the greatest number—this is to say, two-thirds of the Victorian aboriginal race have been allowed to perish, by maintaining at Coranderrk and other stations 2,000 of a few stock and a proper superintendence, there is such a reserve might not only be made a great and permanent benefit to the blacks themselves, while they merely continue to exist upon it and live in their old savage fashion, only to perish miserably in the course of a few years, and to lose the liberty of the country.

But, good as this concession undoubtedly is, it stops short in its real and practical utility. If the country so set aside can be really bad, then it is a poor gift, and of the least benefit; but if it be even poorer, it is worse. It is an absurdity to suppose that the aborigines who were themselves workers, and who have been receiving no assistance from the officer whose authority they declined to obey, while those who remained steady in residence received and are now receiving, such local benefits as the S.A. Government is doing for them, if they are going to be obliged to reside on a station by any coercion, they would soon learn that those who continued to roam at large would have none of the advantages which the settlement brings with it.

More gifts, even in the most lavish profusion, will never materially improve our race; as regards the close restriction of their personal liberty, as nearly as possible as they have always done, that is, on good sized runs, as extensively as fairly procurable, on which they should be exercised in out-of-door, free, open-air industry; all intrusive trespassing being kept away, and the action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only. The action, the energy, the order, and the self-reliance which can never be measured by any mere money standard only.
No. 2.

Sir,

Though I have resigned my position here, and if possible would return to Europe at once, I still feel an interest in the welfare of the work in which I have been so long engaged; and I beg therefore to state here my opinion and ideas about it. I will only carry 1,200 sheep, but with two and a half miles of mallee, and a few acres of land in this neighborhood for a camping ground, which I think when they will not go to a station, will be greatly to their advantage. At my recommendation they have already made a few small blocks of land near the river by means of irrigation. The ground well watered, and can be kept in rotation—any two or three acres beside—judging from a trial made with success, if a sheltered place can be found, to grow potatoes, and at present it is not well practicable. South from here, at Bonyavis, there is fair land for agriculture.

A. W.


Honorable position amongst the whites we should only be glad if our training had helped to it. But if Government would build their promise I feel confident the station would, with management soon be self supporting, and there would be no need of a Parliamentary supply. These are amongst them some good bush carpenters, stonemasons and plasterers. They cut their own boards, make an excellent repair of a dray, &c., of which the work on the place will testify. They want, of course, directing at first.

No. 3.

CIRCULAR ADDRESSED TO LOCAL GUARDIANS OF ABORIGINES AND HONORARY CORRESPONDENTS OF THE BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF ABORIGINES.

No. 1.

The Treasury, Melbourne, 15th February 1877.

I have the honor, by direction, to inform you that the gentlemen named in the margin, having been appointed a Royal Commission to "enquire into the present condition of the aborigines of this colony, and to advise as to the best means of caring for and dealing with them in the future," are desirable of availing themselves of any information or suggestions on the subject that you may be good as to afford.

The Commissioners are in course of ascertainment, by personal observation, the condition of the several aboriginal stations; but will be much obliged if you will be kind enough to convey to them your opinion upon the present condition of the aborigines, and the steps which you think could advantageously be taken for improving existing stations, or for ameliorating the condition of the aborigines who are not domiciled at them, either by attracting them thither, or otherwise dealing with them.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

E. J. THOMAS,

Secretary to the Royal Commission.

No. 2.

Prospect, Casterton, 26th February 1877.

I am in receipt of your printed letter addressed to my brother Mr. H. H. Ralston, who may inform you has left the district; and I am recognised by the Board for the Protection of Aborigines as their agent for the Dergholom district, in lieu of him. In answer to your letter I may inform the Commission that there are four (4) males, and three (3) females, and their children permanently located in this district. At the Board's request I have been trying to prevail upon them to convey to them your opinion upon the present condition of the aborigines, and the steps which you think could advantageously be taken for improving existing stations, or for ameliorating the condition of the aborigines who are not domiciled at them, either by attracting them thither, or otherwise dealing with them.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Yours obediently,

The Secretary to Royal Commission on Aborigines, Melbourne.

No. 5.

Warreng, Camperdown, 26th February 1877.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 14th instant, requesting my opinion of the present state of the aborigines, and the steps to be taken for advantageously improving their condition, and to advise as to the best means of caring for and dealing with them in the future.

With a strong desire to obtain information on the subject of the treatment of the aborigines I, many years since, had an opportunity of conversing with several very intelligent natives of the Port Fairy district, whose homes were at Framlingham and Lake Condah stations. At that time they were very much dissatisfied with their treatment, and I felt confident you will help the aborigines to get now the promise made them fulfilled. The land will before long be alienated, and there will be nothing left to make that good promise. Should, in future, the land not be required by aborigines it could be taken back. As to self-support—my opinion is that growing wheat, oats, or barley, for that purpose would be fruitless. The ground is too poor, it would soon be worked out, and then the labor available—though there are some fine men here—would be insufficient for so hopeless an undertaking. What can be done with prospect of success and comfort is to cultivate small blocks of land near the river by means of irrigation. The ground well watered, and can be kept in rotation—any two or three acres beside—judging from a trial made with success, if a sheltered place can be found, to grow potatoes, and at present it is not well practicable. South from here, at Bonyavis, there is fair land for agriculture.

And now I would say a few words about amalgamation of aborigines with whites. We could point to several cases to-day at our place, and show that it does not do well, even with half-castes. They want, of course, directing at first.

P.S.—The income from the sale of wool and skins should be, however, the chief resources for self support. Two years ago it amounted to about £500; that was the highest. It has always been our plan, and the wish of the people, second of all this.

Yours respectfully,

F. W. SPIESEKER.
necessary for their management and control, was incomprehensible to the understandings and contrary to the habits of a race of beings the judgment of which is still very tender. Let there be a rigorous discipline established at Framlingham station, and the aboriginals employed there, or at any other station to be so formed.

Let them have an understanding that the best thing to be done is to make these unfortunate creatures removed from the debasing influences of the townships.

The departmental allowance of body and bed clothing does not meet their requirements, and they complain of cold during winter.

The women with one calico chemise, one flannel petticoat, and one wincey dress; and the children in proportion—supplies too scanty and insufficient to keep them comfortable. For bedding, they get one double blanket a piece, and children a half blanket, which is not enough under the modern system of hutting and headstocks, a system so very different from the aboriginals' way. I am of the opinion it has given rise to the late excessive mortality amongst the aborigines, the more especially as they have a tendency to overdo things.

The difficulty, as far as I can understand, with the management of the aborigines at the Framlingham station, and I suppose with others, is to prevent them from being sedentary and to send them out into the country, and who refuse to be moved, local guardians might be appointed, and I have no doubt that the inaccessibility of the local tribe, who refused to occupy a comfortable but temporary hut erected for them in the outskirts of the town at an expense to the Government of Ten pounds, preferring to live in a waurn of the most miserable description. To deal with such as these as may be scattered in small numbers over the country, and who refuse to be moved, local guardians might be appointed, and I have no doubt they could be scattered in small numbers over the country, and who refuse to be moved, local guardians might be appointed, and I have no doubt they could be scattered in small numbers over the country, and who refuse to be moved, local guardians might be appointed, and I have no doubt they could be scattered in small numbers over the country, and who refuse to be moved, local guardians might be appointed, and I have no doubt they could be scattered in small numbers over the country, and who refuse to be moved, local guardians might be appointed, and I have no doubt they could be scattered in small numbers over the country, and who refuse to be moved, local guardians might be appointed, and I have no doubt they could be scattered in small numbers over the country, and who refuse to be moved, local guardians might be 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Sir,

I am in receipt of yours of 18th instant, asking my opinion upon the present condition of the aborigines, &c. I think very little has been done of late in the way of interfering to increase the number of those who have a knowledge of the habits and customs of the blacks, and who have their welfare at heart, who can be trusted and kindling that spirit of good influence upon them. Most of the older ones have acquired such a knowledge of the language that little can be done to cure them of it, but if the young are placed out in service, and bound for a period long enough to give an employer time to see good results from their teaching, and to hinder their friends taking them away, the rising generation would be much benefited. The above course was adopted in the case of a man I knew I took from the tribe here, and he is now married to a white man who has a selection, and is now one of the most thrifty wives about, making her own and children's clothes, and most of her husband's. Having her apprenticeship hindered the tribe taking her away, which they often tried.

I enclose you the indenture signed by the girl and her mother's mark, which may interest the Commission, as the subject of it has been the most successful instance of the kind that I have heard of.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

E. J. THOMAS, Eqq., Secretary, Royal Commission.

This Indenture made the twenty-sixth day of April in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-five between Sarah Sanford, now of Sandford, in the county of Normandy, of the first part; Looy, mother of Sarah, an aboriginal native, of the second part; John Henry Jackson, Esq., one of Her Majesty's justices of the peace for the county of Victoria, and correspondent of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines, and his wife Mary Anne Jackson, both of Sandford, of the third part; Witnesseth that the said Sarah Sanford, of her own free will and with the full consent and approval of the said Looy, moved by the desire to have her daughter the said Sarah delivered from evil and vagrant ways, doth hereby place and bind her apprentice to the said John Henry Jackson and Mary Anne Jackson to serve them or the survivor of them for five years from the date hereof, to bear all the fatigues and work proper for a household servant and seamstress; and in consideration of the acceptance of these, the said John Henry Jackson and Mary Anne Jackson, of the said Sarah Sanford into their service and of the covenants on the part of the said John Henry Jackson and Mary Anne Jackson hereinafter set forth, the said Sarah Sanford doth promise and engage that she will at all times during the said term of five years faithfully and diligently serve the said John Henry Jackson and Mary Anne Jackson, and will attend upon and do such service or ever absent herself from service of said John Henry Jackson and Mary Anne Jackson from their house, and will conduct herself with honesty, sobriety, and good temper and respect, and will not be guilty of any profane or lewd conversation or conduct, or of gambling, or any other immorality: And in consideration of the premises the said John Henry Jackson and Mary Anne Jackson doth hereby jointly and severally for himself and herself, their heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns, do covenant with said Sarah Sanford that they will teach her during the said term the duties of a household servant and seamstress, exacting no more work than is needful for five years, strength, and age, and using only such chastisements and restraints as parents might bid bestow upon their children for correction, and afford opportunity of learning to read, write, cast up, and use the accounts, and learning grammar, and carefully instruct her in the faith, precepts, and duties of the Christian religion according as the same is taught by the United Church of England and Ireland, and give her allowance and encouragement to attend the public worship and other sacred ordinances enjoined by the discipline of said church, with a view of qualifying her as household servant and seamstress to be placed out as a good Christian and dutiful subject of Our Sovereign Lady the Queen; and as a further recompence for her services they hereby bind themselves to pay at the expiration of the said term the sum of twenty-five pounds coin of the realm unto the said Sarah Sanford to her own proper uses, and supply her during the said term of her apprenticeship with wholesome food sufficient in quantity, lodging, decent apparel, washing, medicine, and attendance during sickness, and guard her from all harm, injuries, and wrong-doing at their own costs, not sparing labor in this behalf: Provided always, and it is here agreed between and by all parties hereto, that should said Sarah Sanford do sign and seal this our allowance of such indenture of apprenticeship before the same has been executed by any other parties thereto, in pursuance of the laws and customs in such cases made and provided.

George Carmichaels, J.P.,
John R. Murray, J.P.
Sarah Sanford,
Looy X.

We, whose names are underwritten, justices of the peace sitting in the county of Normandy, consent to the placing-out of said Sarah Sanford as apprentice according to the meaning and intent of this indenture, and do sign and seal this our allowance of such indenture of apprenticeship before the same has been executed by any other parties thereto, in pursuance of the laws and customs in such cases made and provided.

J. H. JACKSON.
MARY ANN JACKSON.
SARAH SANFORD,
LOUY X.

In witness whereof we put our names and seals on date within written.

J. II. JACKSON.

No. 2.

In reply to your circular of the 15th ultimo, asking me to convey to the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the present condition of the aborigines as apprentices according to the meaning and intent of this indenture, and do sign and seal this our allowance of such indenture of apprenticeship before the same has been executed by any other parties thereto, in pursuance of the laws and customs in such cases made and provided.

George Carmichaels, J.P.,
John R. Murray, J.P.
Sarah Sanford,
Looy X.

In reply to your communication of the 15th ultimo, asking my "opinion upon the present condition of the aborigines, and the steps which might advantageously be taken for improving existing stations, &c." I beg to say that my views relative to the enquiry, I have the honor to state that, in consequence of the removal many years ago of nearly, if not all, of the aborigines of my district to the station formed for them at Lake Condah, I am not in a position to give any information or suggestions that would be of use to the Commissioners.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

E. J. THOMAS, Eqq.,
Secretary to the Royal Commission, Melbourne.

No. 9.

In reply to your communication of the 15th ultimo, asking my "opinion upon the present condition of the aborigines, and the steps which might advantageously be taken for improving existing stations, &c." I beg to say that my knowledge of the aborigines only extends to the Wimmera district; and, so far as the mission stations at the Wimmera district is concerned, I think that everything is being done for the natives that humanity and a regard for their temporal and spiritual welfare can suggest. I believe I am correct in saying that all the natives of the Wimmera district, except perhaps three or four old persons, are now resident at the mission station. The exceptions referred to cannot be induced to give up the habits of a lifetime, even for the comforts of a mission station; but, as they are old people, they may well, in respect to residence, be permitted to follow the bent of their own inclinations. They are always kindly treated by the occupants of pastoral runs, and are never allowed to want either food or clothing.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

C. M. OFFICER.

To E. J. Thomas, Eqq.,
Mont Alto, Toorak, 8th March 1877.

In reply to your communication of the 15th ultimo, asking my "opinion upon the present condition of the aborigines, and the steps which might advantageously be taken for improving existing stations, &c." I beg to say that my knowledge of the aborigines only extends to the Wimmera district; and, so far as the mission stations at the Wimmera district is concerned, I think that everything is being done for the natives that humanity and a regard for their temporal and spiritual welfare can suggest. I believe I am correct in saying that all the natives of the Wimmera district, except perhaps three or four old persons, are now resident at the mission station. The exceptions referred to cannot be induced to give up the habits of a lifetime, even for the comforts of a mission station; but, as they are old people, they may well, in respect to residence, be permitted to follow the bent of their own inclinations. They are always kindly treated by the occupants of pastoral runs, and are never allowed to want either food or clothing.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

C. M. OFFICER.
In answer to your circular of the 15th February, I forward you my opinions with regard to the aborigines.

First, I think that all the present stragglers should be brought to one of the six stations already formed, or, if required, to another station formed on the River Murray for the married people with the children and old people; but any single men or women under engagement to settlers to remain with them, but the employer to send copy of agreement to the Board, with full particulars of the party with him.

With regard to the stations, I would recommend that the young people should be apprenticed out to respectable employers, say at the age of fifteen, for three years, to be taught some useful employment, and receive £8 or £10 a year, just to clothe them comfortably. At the end of that time they would be able to earn good wages. They would then be six years older, so that if they were industrious, and saved my £200 in the next four years, when they would be twenty-two, on their showing, they would have £100 acres of ground as a farm to settle down on. It might come out of the present reserves for them, as this would eventually work off all further aid from the Government, whereas, if carried on as at present, the annual grant from the Government will require increasing at the rate now carried on, allowing the young men to go and earn money—and some of them do get large sums by running and jumping at athletic sports about—which money they spend, if not in drink, in the most reckless way, and then return to the station, where they are clothed and fed for doing very little work; consequently they do not realise that state growing, this gradually their own pleasure. Nor will they do otherwise while they have these stations to fall back upon when they like, without a penny in their pockets or perhaps a rag to their backs.

The young people have now as the age of fifteen a better education than most of the farmers' children of the same age, and quite as intelligent, and are both able and willing to go to work. I have had one of these last month, who has done well and is very happy. I have supplied him with one pound's worth of clothes.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
E. J. Thomas, Esq.,
Secretary, Royal Commission to Aborigines, Treasury, Melbourne.

In consequence of my usual absence from home at this season of the year, your letter of 15th ultimo did not come into my hands for nearly three weeks after date.

In reply to the enquiries of the Royal Commission—

1st. As to my opinion regarding the present condition of the aborigines, truly. The steps which I think could advantageously be taken for improving existing aboriginal stations, or

2ndly. For ameliorating the condition of the aborigines who are not domiciled at them, either by attracting them thither, or otherwise dealing with them.

The first is a very wide question, and to answer it fully and do justice to the subject would require many pages of writing. I have general knowledge of the state of the aborigines throughout the rest of the colony than I am possessed of. These conditions being impracticable, I shall therefore confine myself to a few remarks on the condition of these my own people.

It is almost unnecessary to state what is well known to every observant European resident among them, and that must of course be equal to so the Royal Commission, that the aborigines are yearly deteriorating, and fast approaching final extinction. The adults of both sexes are almost without exception inveterate "drinkers." This vice in them is far stronger, and, if possible, more rapidly fatal in its results than with the same class of white men. They will work hard and continuously, as far as their constantly lowing energies will admit of, for weeks or months for the sole purpose of accumulating a few pounds at the end, and then having a great drinking bout and general debauch. Formerly many of them used to keep their earnings and buy clothes, blankets, rations, guns, or articles of luxury, but now their acquired degradation has too strong a hold upon them for any such wise purpose to prevail. They trust either to the charity of friends or to the Government aid to provide them with old or new clothes, and with blankets and rations, but they rarely give money for these things themselves.

They will do anything practicable for drink, and even, if possible, will sell their clothes for money to obtain it. To deprive them or to prevent their obtaining possession of it, when in their near prospect, will often excite their bitterest enmity and aggressive hostility. On one occasion lately I went into a camp, and forcibly took away a whole bottle of brandy and a portion of another from under a gin, who was sitting on them quite sober, and as quietly and dignified as
Rachael on her ideals, and broke them before her face. The rage of herself and cookie at this sacrilege knew no bounds, and the first thing they did, after giving vent to volleys of black and white oaths, was to take their new Government blankets and burn them on the nearest fire. These were pulled out half consumed; but the act signified their contempt for my official position, their greater love for the spirits than for the blanket, and their present non-appreciation of my attempt to do them good. In the same way again, but not for several months.

Many of them work on my own and on neighboring stations for money, and at particular seasons will collect curr and other eggs, or catch fish for sale, as a more easy and agreeable manner of obtaining the means for a good drink. For a week or more at a time I have known them on several occasions during last year, and often before, collect in considerable numbers on the New South Wales side, or on Pental Island, immediately above Swan Hill, and enjoy in their peculiar manner the fruits of months of labor of several of the working coolies, to the very great annoyance of my own people and of any others within ear-reach of these midnight aboriginal orgies. In these places they are safe from the police, and can then indulge, fight, and debauch to their full desire.

Bearing this in mind, I suppose the aborigines are bound to place themselves in the care of any of the institutions established for their benefit, that very great good and prolongation of life, of a tolerably enjoyable character, and possibly something infinitely better, would be insured for them.

To the second question I can give you no reply, as I know but little of the management of the aboriginal stations, though from the many good results I have seen of a considerable residence and course of training at them, in the cases of both young and grown blacks, I cannot doubt their very useful and beneficent character.

With few exceptions, the aborigines on Mildura, and those who have been receiving rations, are in a healthy condition. I am not aware of any deaths having taken place during the past twelve months, nor, to my knowledge, have there been any births.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
E. J. Thomas, Secretary to Royal Commission for enquiry into Condition of Aborigines.

GENTLEMEN,

Mildura, 8th April 1877.

Absence from home has prevented me from answering your communication of 15th February sooner. With few exceptions, the aborigines on Mildura, and those who have been receiving rations, are in a healthy condition. I am not aware of any deaths having taken place during the past twelve months, nor, to my knowledge, have there been any births.

There are no aboriginal stations near me, and, therefore, I am unable to pass an opinion or give any information with regard to them.

To remove any of the blacks from off their beat is a mistake; and they are as a whole contented and well off where they are. My advice would be to appoint an officer whose duty it would be to look after the aborigines from Swan Hill to the South Australian boundary, but whose chief duty would be to watch the wine-shops and several of the low public-houses on the banks of the river.

The rations, &c., distributed by me were of great service to the aged and infirm, but were not nearly sufficient to supply the demands of the many aborigines who made application at the station for them.

I am of opinion the local guardians should be empowered to obtain medical advice and medicines for the aborigines when actually necessary.

I am, Gentlemen,
Yours respectfully,
S. H. OFFICER,

To His Honor Sir W. P. Stawell, President; and Members of the Royal Commission appointed to enquire into Condition of Aborigines.

No. 15.

Kandyke, 9th April 1877.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your circular of 15th February, and regret exceedingly that my absence from home has prevented me from replying earlier.

With regard to the position of the aborigines on other stations, I am not in a position to speak; but as the principal ones have been, I believe, personally inspected by the members of the Commission, they will not require my opinion thereon.

As regards the aborigines here, I am sorry to say their condition is most unsatisfactory, and I really see no remedy, at least in the case of adults.

They are universally addicted to drink, and situated as we are here on the River Murray, they can at any time procure liquor by crossing into New South Wales, in defiance of the Victorian police.

All able-bodied adults and lads can readily obtain employment at high wages, and are therefore quite independent, and would be difficult to retain on any station.

I would suggest that all female children, whether black or half-caste, should be removed to some permanent station, such as Coranderrk, as they merely grow up prostitutes here.

As regards the police, I am bound to say that they are very poor, and are very ready to desert their posts.

The women do their best to make available to those who enable them to enforce the Act against persons supplying intoxicating liquor to the blacks.

E. J. Thomas, Esq., Treasury, Melbourne.
No. 16.
CIRCULAR TO LOCAL GUARDIANS OF ABORIGINES AND HONORARY CORRESPONDENTS OF THE BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF ABORIGINES.

Sir,

The Treasury, Melbourne, 14th April 1877.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the and to convey to you the thanks of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the condition of the aborigines, &c., for the observations therein contained.

I am directed, however, to state, that while glad of your general opinion on the subject of the condition of the aborigines and their future treatment, certain definite points have arisen on which the Commissioners feel it desirable to invite the local guardians of aborigines to express their views more particularly, and I am accordingly to submit to you the accompanying list of questions, for your answers to which the Commissioners will be obliged.

For your convenience in replying, I beg to state that, in doing so, it will suffice to indicate the questions by their respective numbers.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

E. J. THOMAS,
Esquire

Secretary to the Commissioners.

LIST OF QUESTIONS.

1. What is your opinion of as a place for an aboriginal station?
   (1.) As a sanitary station?
   (2.) As to its situation and the temptations to which the inmates are exposed by reason of its proximity to population?

2. Can you make any suggestions for improvement of its management, or as to the maintenance of discipline at aboriginal stations?

3. Do you think it desirable to pay for the labor of the aborigines?

4. If so, in what manner; whether by money alone, or by money and rations and goods, and at what rates or prices?

5. Do you think it advisable that rations and goods should be purchased on the station, and a store kept for that purpose; and, if goods, of what kinds should a supply be kept?

6. Would it be practicable to pay to the managers of the stations the wages earned by aborigines instead of to the aborigines themselves, and thus encourage a resort to the stations for what they want, instead of squandering their money elsewhere?

If so, what suggestions can you offer for carrying out this object?

7. Do you think it advisable to board out orphan children?

8. Do you think it desirable to encourage the aborigines to hire their labor out to employers in the country, either for long or for short terms?

9. Having regard to the disposition and habits of the aborigines, do you think it desirable that the youths should be apprenticed to learn trades or occupations?

10. Do you think it desirable to encourage handicrafts at the stations, and of what kinds?

11. Should the main object of a station be to train the aborigines to earn their living abroad, or to form self-supporting communities on each station?

12. Have you any suggestions to make as to the treatment of the aborigines?

13. Can you give any information as to the aborigines who are not at the stations; the number in your district, their condition, and mode of obtaining a livelihood; and can you make any suggestions for the amelioration of their condition?

No. 17.
CIRCULAR TO LOCAL GUARDIANS OF ABORIGINES AND HONORARY CORRESPONDENTS OF THE BOARD FOR THE PROTECTION OF ABORIGINES.

Sir,

The Treasury, Melbourne, 14th April 1877.

Adverting to my circular of the 15th February, I am directed by the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the condition of the aborigines, &c., to state that, while they will be glad to receive your views generally on the subject of the condition of the Aborigines and their future treatment, as requested in my previous letter, it is deemed desirable to specify some points with regard to which more particularly the Commissioners desire to elicit information.

I have therefore the honor to enclose a list of questions, for your replies to which the Commissioners will be obliged.

For your convenience in replying, I beg to mention that, in doing so, it will suffice to indicate the questions by their respective numbers.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

E. J. THOMAS,
Esquire

Secretary to the Commissioners.

[Note—The enclosure to the above letter was the same as to the preceding one.]
In reply to your communication of the 3rd ultimo, relative to the Framlingham aboriginal station, I beg to state—

1. That I think favorably of the reserve at Framlingham and its suitability for the aborigines for the following reasons—I think it affords them a good hunting ground for native game, and at some seasons of the year a supply of fish from the river Hopkins. There are portions of the land well suited for cultivation, and other parts, with moderate exertion, could be considerably improved so as to be profitable for cattle or sheep. The natives appear from their habits and traditions to be attached to certain localities, and consequently many of them to this part.

(1.) The climate of this Western district is probably the most pleasant in Australia, and the vicinity of the colony of Victoria, enjoying as we do immunity from the extremes of heat and cold to which other parts are liable. A judicious system of drainage applied to the reserve at Framlingham would probably improve it in a sanitary point of view as well as increase the fertility of its soil.

(2.) There are six natives in this neighborhood who refuse to reside at the station; their habits and moral condition are degenerate to the last degree. The improved condition of the station, and an informed public sentiment, would operate as seen in the ownership of a gun, a horse, a cart, or superior articles of furniture to their neighbors.

2.—In addition to the central board and frequent inspection by its officer, probably a local committee, and a code of concise practical rules, with the loss of privileges upon their infraction, would have excellent effect.

3. I have the fullest confidence in benefit resulting from the payment of labor. It would be an important factor in developing intellect, manliness, and self-reliance, as well as being the natural stimulus to industry. The Framlingham native reserve, in a limited degree, an appreciation of the surroundings of civilized life, and a desire to possess property, as engaged in the occupation of a gun, a horse, a cart, or superior articles of furniture to their neighbors.

4. As the community of Framlingham is made up of the old and feeble as well as invalids and orphans, and from other considerations, as that they have had no proper training to labor, I believe the better method would be to combine rations and payment in addition to an allowance of tea, sugar, flour, meal, soap, candles, flannel, serge, muslin, and tobacco. I would place it within the power of every industrious person to earn from five shillings to twenty shillings per week. And this could be so conducted as to be reproductive. The rates for labor should be similar to those ruling in the locality.

5. I think this also should be left to the discretion of the manager. The half-castes, for example, so far as my knowledge goes, all gravitate towards the station life; they are attached to their own people, and exhibit generally a soft feebleness of character. There is an absence of force and vigor of any kind, as is seen in the ownership of a gun, a horse, a cart, or superior articles of furniture to their neighbors.

6. The half-castes, for example, so far as my knowledge goes, all gravitate towards the station life; they are attached to their own people, and exhibit generally a soft feebleness of character. There is an absence of force and vigor of any kind, as seen in the ownership of a gun, a horse, a cart, or superior articles of furniture to their neighbors.

7. I am, your obedient servant,

URIAH COOMBS.
3. Certainly, as they are very well aware of the market value of their labor.

4. By money alone, and not by clothes; because, should a policeman get the latter, the whole amount is certain to be spent in dissipation.

5. Store should be kept on the station, and everything required by the natives, excepting intoxicating drinks, related to them at wholesale prices, to induce them to deal there; and to dispose of skins, rugs, baskets, weapons, &c, in exchange for articles they may fancy. I am strongly of opinion that the sight of merchandise in a local store would tend very much to avert the natives from stealing them on articles to be obtained at a cheaper rate than from whites.

6. I am very desirous if they would consent to this, for when they work on stations and farms they expect to get paid in cash. Some employers might give a choice payable to the manager of the aboriginal station, but I fear the adult natives would not readily consent to this more than once.

7. Yes, to respectable persons for a period of years.—See Note 1.

8. Yes; I have employed them for lengthened periods as shepherds and stock-keepers, and also in cutting thistles, ring trees, and working sheep. In many instances, at their request, a written agreement was signed and exchanged, and faithfully observed, except when the chief of their tribe demanded their presence elsewhere—an order they dared not disobey, and which even now might prove a barrier to steady service.

9. For reasons stated in previous paragraph, an apprenticeship to a trade would not be possible, as the chief's orders must be obeyed, and the indenture would be broken.

10. Yes; rough bush work, such as splitting, fencing, and cutting huts; but I am very doubtful if they would settle down to a trade. When the old chiefs are dead and their laws are obsolete, it may be otherwise with the pure natives. The half-breds are more manageable, and would, I think, willingly consent to be apprenticed to tradesmen, such as carpenters and blacksmiths.

11. I see, and be encouraged to seek employment abroad, instead of the present system of endeavoring to keep them at home, in order to make a show of numbers, and also to get work on, and against their inclinations. Many refuse to go to Framlingham, because they are expected to work for nothing; and I believe nearly all the able-bodied men and women would leave were it not for the society of their friends there. They never will form a self-supporting community at Framlingham, in consequence of the very miserable nature of the soil; neither will they be self-supporting anywhere else, if they are dealt with fairly and paid for their labor.

12. I would not do away with the present stations, because the natives have been ruthlessly driven from their hunting grounds, and have the strongest and most undeniable claims on the people of this colony for support and protection, without labor of any kind in return; and while residing on these stations they should have every "creature comfort," and be allowed to go and come as they please.

13. There are only two aboriginal old men now belonging to this district, and they live in the brewery at Camperdown, and are well fed by kind friends about town, and also by Mr. Jackson, the brewer. As local guardian I have never supplied them with anything at the expense of the Government, and as they are kindly treated, they will not go to Framlingham.

I have the honor to be, Sir, Your most obedient servant, JAMES DAWSON, Local Guardian of Aborigines.

NOTE 1.—With reference to boarding out children, I have to-day ascertained that a very respectable woman, Mrs. Harrison, a neighbor of mine, has obtained possession of a pure-bred aboriginal girl, about five or six years of age, which she intends to maintain and educate. I think the department should encourage such kind acts by an allowance of clothing.

E. J. Thomas, Esq., Secretary to the Commissioners (Aboriginal Department), Treasury, Melbourne.

No. 21.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your circular for improving condition of aborigines. In reply about the questions concerning Framlingham, I have never been there or near it, and therefore can give no opinion concerning it, in any form.

I think it desirable to encourage them to work by paying for their labor.

I think it better to pay them partly in money, and the remainder in clothes (and rations a certain quantity every week). If they were paid in money, they would probably spend a large portion in intoxicating drinks, and beg for old clothes instead of buying new ones.

Where there are a number of blacks, I think it advisable that rations and goods should be kept for them on the station; blankets, woolen and twill shirts, trousers, and boots; also women's clothing; also tobacco, tea, and oatmeal, if required.

Where there are a number of aborigines, I think it advisable to pay the managers of stations, and let the managers pay the aborigines in money, and supply clothing, just as the manager of a sheep station would to shepherds and other workmen. Probably the way in which Lake Hindmarsh station was conducted is as good a plan as any I have heard of.

The best plan would be to send orphan children to a station like Lake Hindmarsh.

I think it desirable to encourage aborigines to hire themselves to a good master in the country for short terms, as they might get tired when hired for a long period, but they might continue in one place for many short terms. I have known two in the Colac district—one half-breed called Richard Sharp, and one black called Billy—who lived for many years with Mr. Andrew Murray, on a cattle and sheep station, and could earn wages enough to keep themselves independent of Government supplies. Billy occasionally comes to Colac, on a spree, spending some of his money, but generally returns to his master again, as he considers that place his home. I have never seen Richard Sharp intoxicated; he was married about two years since to a white woman, and then left Mr. Murray, and has since been working on another sheep station; he now rents a forty-acre paddock which the Commissioners of Lands gave me permission to fence for the aborigines; the Colac shire council granted funds for the fencing. The aborigines asked me to apply for the land, that they might have a place of their own to reside on. I have a brick house and a wooden one built for them, but I cannot get them to cultivate any part or stay there long enough; if I would, I might buy two or three cows for them, to milk, with the money I have from the rent. I built one of the cottages with part of the money. Richard Sharp, the half-breed, and his wife have rented it since 1st October 1876 at 418 per annum; he has paid one quarter's rent.

I do not think it suitable to their habits to apply themselves to any kind of mechanics.

I do not think they will apply themselves to blacksmithing.

From what I know of the Colac tribe, they do not like, in general, to work long in one place; but they would be encouraged by some settlers to do light work, such as cutting thistles, assisting about sheep shearing time, and boundary traces. There are some now, and for many years past, at my sheep station on Carr's Plains who are very useful, and Jim Crow here is often useful on the sheep; also in the garden, shooting birds and picking up wood occasionally. He has not worked with me since December.

13. The number and names of aborigines in this locality are—Jim Crow and his lubra, Donna Ives; 1 boy and 1 gir1; Jackey Coobie and lubra, Alice (both of them often intoxicated); 2; Jacky Coobie and lubra, Susan (the lubra often intoxicated), 2; Billy, generally working with Mr. Murray (drunk occasionally); 1; Richard Sharp, half-breed, married to a white woman, keeps himself independent of Government, and is a well-behaved man; I have never seen or heard of him being discovered drunk, and even saved money enough to buy an old horse and cart, and drive it to town from one place to another. I may give you some information of his integrity. The year before last he was some months
working at Mr. Mannfield's, and when about to remove he asked Mr. P. Manfield for some old clothes, which Mr. Manfield gave him; but before Jim Crow left he told one of the servants next day that he wanted to speak to Mr. Manfield again; and Mr. Manfield asked what he wanted; so Jim Crow asked Mr. Manfield if he was going to take his trousers pocket, and then held up three £1 notes and said, "You see that," which rather surprised Mr. Manfield, and he said, "The white men have no horses as you are, Jim," and then gave him a rub for his honesty. It is rather difficult to answer all the above questions, but I hope you will find them of some use.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

E. J. Thomas, Esq., Secretary to the Commissioners for the Protection of Aborigines,

Your obedient servant,

ALEX. DENNIS.

**Appendix.**

I respectfully submit the following lines as a kind of history of the Framlingham natives. They are the Hopkins River tribe, and are very much attached to their own district:

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1. I consider Framlingham an admirable location for the aborigines. It is very elevated above the river; is well timbered; the soil appears capable of being very productive; and there is abundance of land for pasturage or the pursuit of native game.

2. As a sanitary station, I think very highly of it.

3. I should imagine it to be free from many of the dangers usually accruing to the natives from the proximity of the white settlers.

4. I would therefore respectfully recommend that, in lieu of Mr. Lane, P.M., being the honorary representative of the Board in Melbourne, Mr. J. G. Crawford, of Warrnambool, and Mr. Tozer, who resides near Framlingham, or any other gentlemen whom the Board might approve, and that this joint board should have the sole control of the station under the authority of the Central Board. This would be a great protection and comfort to the manager as well as to the natives. I mention this with some anxiety, as oftentimes letters from the station have been long unattended to. Once I know Mr. Lane, on pressing appeal, had to order supplies at his own risk, which had long been written for; and, on Mr. Lane communicating, the answer involved a sharp reprimand on Mr. Goodall, the manager, for not writing, whereas his applications had covered many months, and had remained utterly unanswered all this time. I would submit that Framlingham should have a small building in which the natives could assemble in the evenings, and where a library should be formed for their use. When last there, in 1874, there was only the store, in which all the missions, &c., were kept, with no appliance to render it usable as a place of amusement or worship.

5. I would only further add that I think it desirable that the white people should cease to regard or speak to the blackfellow as the whitefellow. Absolute exclusion is hardly possible, if even desirable, and Framlingham is largely protected from the whites by its excorable roads, which do not present the same drawbacks to the natives as to the white man.

6. Should a library be conceded, I would place it wholly in the custody of the natives. William Good and his wife, two excellent Christian blacks, would act admirably as librarians.

7. They had a large request for books; but this could all be wholly left with a local board.

8. But this could all be wholly left with a local board.

9. Many natives may be trusted anywhere—more might be trusted for the inhuman conduct of the whites.

10. I can scarcely answer this: Only here and there probably would a case occur of a youth deserting or being willing to be procured, who could be dealt with by the local board as it is.

11. I think handicaps should be encouraged at every station.

12. I would not "board out" a black child. I believe there is sufficient earnestness of purpose among the white Christian women of this colony to guarantee more than a supply of persons who would willingly take in and train up the very few little ones who are born on the reserves. The station itself is ample evidence of the influences of Christian women, whose holy example and gentle female influence has greatly tended to make Framlingham what it is.

13. I would have the natives be paid, and not be paid. Their pretty houses on the banks of the Hopkins will testify their capacity to value the social comforts of civilization, and they would like to have the means of procuring these things. Framlingham long since would have been more wholesome had the same means been taken. The men and the women were applied to for books. Application was made for hop canes. I believe the number sent was so small that the Natives Board would have been in a position to take it away. Anything like compulsion to stay on the land I would utterly repudiate: they are free men and women. But I think he is secure in the possession of it, and the distress of mind he feels if a rumour be spread that Government is going to take it away. Anything like compulsion to stay on the land I would utterly repudiate: they are free men and women. But I think we could encourage a good supply of books if only a place to keep them in be provided. The natives have neither money nor materials.

14. On pressing appeal, had to order supplies at his own risk, which had long been written for; and, on Mr. Lane communicating, the answer involved a sharp reprimand on Mr. Goodall, the manager, for not writing, whereas his applications had covered many months, and had remained utterly unanswered all this time. I would submit that Framlingham should have a small building in which the natives could assemble in the evenings, and where a library should be formed for their use. When last there, in 1874, there was only the store, in which all the missions, &c., were kept, with no appliance to render it usable as a place of amusement or worship.

15. I would therefore respectfully recommend that, in lieu of Mr. Lane, P.M., being the honorary representative of the Board in Melbourne, Mr. J. G. Crawford, of Warrnambool, and Mr. Tozer, who resides near Framlingham, or any other gentlemen whom the Board might approve, and that this joint board should have the sole control of the station under the authority of the Central Board. This would be a great protection and comfort to the manager as well as to the natives. I mention this with some anxiety, as oftentimes letters from the station have been long unattended to. Once I know Mr. Lane, on pressing appeal, had to order supplies at his own risk, which had long been written for; and, on Mr. Lane communicating, the answer involved a sharp reprimand on Mr. Goodall, the manager, for not writing, whereas his applications had covered many months, and had remained utterly unanswered all this time. I would submit that Framlingham should have a small building in which the natives could assemble in the evenings, and where a library should be formed for their use. When last there, in 1874, there was only the store, in which all the missions, &c., were kept, with no appliance to render it usable as a place of amusement or worship.

16. I would only further add that I think it desirable that the white people should cease to regard or speak to the blackfellow as the whitefellow. Absolute exclusion is hardly possible, if even desirable, and Framlingham is largely protected from the whites by its excorable roads, which do not present the same drawbacks to the natives as to the white man.

17. I would not "board out" a black child. I believe there is sufficient earnestness of purpose among the white Christian women of this colony to guarantee more than a supply of persons who would willingly take in and train up the very few little ones who are born on the reserves. The station itself is ample evidence of the influences of Christian women, whose holy example and gentle female influence has greatly tended to make Framlingham what it is.

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No. 23.
Nareeb Nareeb, 19th April 1877.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Yours obediently,
CHAS. GRAY.

1. I have never visited Lake Condah, but believe the country round it is very wet. (1) Too wet.
2. The country in the vicinity of Condah must be thinly populated, and the blacks living there cannot be subjected to much temptation.
3. The aborigines object to work unless paid.
4. I have, if possible, paid the larger proportion in rations and goods; but the aborigines like to get money, which is too often spent in spirits.
5. Many of the aborigines like to lay out a store the money they have earned, in the purchase of tobacco, caps, gaudily-colored handkerchiefs, &c.
6. The aborigines would not consent to their wages being held by another, and would not work if this were to be done.
7. I have invariably seen orphan children well taken care of by the women of the tribe.
8. Decidedly encourage the aborigines to work for long periods, if possible; but this is difficult, as they do not like to remain long in one place.
9. I would recommend that the boys be taught trades, and the girls trained as nurses and domestic servants.
10. Employment as stock-keepers, shepherds, grooms, &c., suits the aborigines best; such indoor trades as shoemaking, tailoring, and the like, blacks could not be got to work at.
11. If they could be got to remain on the station they would be kept from much temptation.
12. I would recommend that the few still left should be well fed and clothed. Doubtless in a few years the race would be extinct.
13. Of the forty or fifty who, fifteen or twenty years ago, were supplied with clothing and rations by me, a few have gone to the Framlingham station. As far as I can learn, there are not more than eight left in the neighborhood.

No. 24.
Benyes, Apaley, 26th April 1877.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Yours faithfully,
HUGH L. McLEOD.

1. The situation (Lake Condah station) is good, and half of the aborigines were born there, a fact which endears it to them. Fish and kangaroo are there.
2. As a sanitary station, very good.
3. The exposure is more for good than evil.
4. At each station there should be superintendent, teacher, and working overseer; the latter to have charge of all working parties, and to report bad conduct to the manager, for which fines should be inflicted.
5. Yes.
6. Cash to be paid by the Government to the aborigines, through the manager, according to the value of their labor, on a sliding scale, and the Government to supply rations as at present.
7. No; it would act injuriously for the well-being of the aborigines.
8. Too wet.
9. I do not think so. The country in the vicinity of Condah must be thinly populated, and the blacks living there cannot be subjected to much temptation.
10. I would have the aborigines kept to labor on the station, they should be paid monthly, and allowed to go to the nearest township to make their purchases, but under the care of either the teacher, overseer, or manager. They ought to be taught the means of earning their daily bread, any prayers morning and evening for all on the stations.
11. I cannot state the number; but the work they get their living is by the squatters feeding and clothing them. It is seldom that they will work for the selectors, for they rarely get paid for their labor. Of course the aborigines consider that they have a right to be kept by the squatters, as they made their homes on the stations in the early days before the time of the Central Board or the mission stations.
13. Of the forty or fifty who, fifteen or twenty years ago, were supplied with clothing and rations by me, a few have gone to the Framlingham station. As far as I can learn, there are not more than eight left in the neighborhood.

No. 25.
Hamilton, 19th April 1877.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Yours faithfully,
P. LEARMONTH, Local Guardian.
I hereby send you my opinions in answer to your questions sent me, and trust they may be of use in assisting the Commissioners to draw up an Act of regulations for the improvement and welfare of our poor aborigines, who I have always (now for nearly forty years) taken an interest in, and stood their friend on many occasions, and no one knows their ways better, if as well, as myself. In 1839, a boy of about twelve attached himself to me, and never left me for nine years; went to Sydney and Tasmania; indeed wherever I travelled he went with me. At last, when their tribe was almost extinct (the Bunyip one), a few leading men forced him away to a meeting with other tribes, and he died or was killed soon after; and even here, up to very lately, they have come to me with any complaints against one another, as well as whites, to settle for them; and I shall be glad to give the Commissioners any information and assistance in my power.

I have the honor to be, Your obedient servant.

J. N. McLEOD.

E. J. Thomas, Esq., Secretary to Commissioners on Aborigines.

1.—Very good (Lake Condah station), and would be much improved by the draining of the fine flat on it, which would, if laid down in clover, keep fifteen sheep to the acre. You could not well procure a situation with fewer people near or public-house further away.

2.—The manager should have the same power as a master over servants.

3.—It would be well to pay them in food and clothing, any money over to be given at the manager’s discretion, or kept and invested for them. They would have to enter into an agreement. Women, without children, should be made to work, if only keeping a garden for themselves.

4.—Goods should be given at cost prices; the old people, the helpless, and children not to be charged.

5.—Yes; and comforts as well as necessaries kept for sale, such as jams, raisins, also dry fish.

6.—There must have the money and goods to pay them with.

7.—I think not.

8.—Those without families who can procure employment, and grown up single men, should be compelled to leave the station and earn their own living. Getting their food and clothing as it were for nothing has a very bad effect on them, as they will never save money or think of making a home for themselves. All these could, if they like, do as one has done near here, taken a selection of 290 acres and living on it (Jiminy Uncles).

9.—Decidedly; the girls also to be trained and sent out to service. I have one teaching to be housemaid, giving her £10 per annum, and she is doing better than several white girls we have had; and I would take two of the boys now, about fifteen, at the same rate, for three years, and teach them gardening and all kinds of farming work; and I think I could get more money for the same terms for some others. One or two might be trained on the station.

10.—The work on the station would teach this.

11.—They should be taught, so as to earn their own living.

12.—The manager must have the same power as a master of his hired servant.

13.—There are only two married couples without families who have been banished from the station for a time for bad conduct. They are allowed to procure their own living: indeed one couple I would give, as I have done, £30 a year to, if they would settle down to the light work they are capable of doing. Both are troublesome on the station, and are better kept away; but an Act would have to be passed to give managers, with local guardians, these powers, and the present one abolished.

I beg to submit answers to the questions asked for in your letter of the 14th April, and am exceedingly sorry for the delay, but in the interim have been gaining information.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Yours obediently,

JOHN RALSTON.
Author/s:
Victoria. Royal Commission on the Aborigines; Stawell, William Foster Sir, 1815-1889

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