

1932-33-34.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

Australia. Governor-general.

TERRITORY OF PAPUA.

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE

Year 1932-1933.

Presented by Command, 28th June, 1934; ordered to be printed, 25th July, 1934.

[*Cost of Paper:—Preparation not given; 745 copies; approximate cost of printing and publishing, £56.*]

Printed and Published for the GOVERNMENT of the COMMONWEALTH of AUSTRALIA
by L. F. JOHNSTON, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra.

212.—F.752.—PRICE 1s. 8d.

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION—SHOULD GIRLS LEARN TO WRITE ?

The subjects discussed at these Council meetings are such as the extension of gardens and the purchase of seed yams and sago, the improvement of the water supply, the proposed purchase of a motor lorry to bring in produce from the gardens, the repair of damage done by village pigs, the best method of selecting Councillors, the banking of money, and so forth.

One subject seemed to me to be of exceptional interest. There was a discussion at a meeting held last April regarding the education of girls. Some of the Councillors urged that only male children should be sent to school. Their argument was that the boys on leaving school go to work and can find a use for their knowledge, but that education is no good to a girl; in fact, the time she has spent in school has unfitted her for her work in the village, and she cannot make pots or attend to a garden. Then, if the girl knows how to write, she will write letters to some boy to whom she takes a fancy, and so upset the arrangements made for her marriage. "Even married women", it was said in a report of the debate, "who have learned to read and write, have been the cause of quarrels and disputes, through writing letters or receiving them from a man who is not her husband."

The argument that the girl has not learned her garden work or her pot making is one of considerable force, though I think that in the ordinary village school the routine is not so strenuous as to interfere very seriously with these activities: as to the abuse of letter writing I can offer no opinion. I am, in fact, the last man to appeal to on a question of the kind.

The general argument reminds me very much of those which I used to hear against compulsory education some 50 years ago; while, with regard to the education of girls in particular, experts seem to be agreed that this is even more important than the education of boys.*

* "Lord Dalhousie's dictum is probably true that a larger proportionate impulse is given to the advancement of a people by the education of women than by that of the men."—Lord Lugard: *Education in Tropical Africa*. Longmans Green & Co.; reprinted from the *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1925.

NATIVE HARVEST—VARIETY OF CROP.

I wrote last year about the generous harvest that had been collected in the Port Moresby district, mostly from the banks of the Laloki River. There was a good harvest this year, also, but a lot of damage was done by floods. The gardens in this district are much larger, so far as my observation goes, than they used to be some years ago; and I think, too, that there are more of them. The crops are certainly more varied; the Resident Magistrate, Central Division, in his report of a visit to the native gardens on the Laloki, mentions a garden of eight acres in extent, and speaks of crops of yams, bananas, sweet potatoes, manioc, peanuts, melons, rice, paw paws, sugar cane, oranges, beans, taro and eschalots. This variety of crop is not confined to Port Moresby, but is found practically all through Papua, for most of the imported foodstuffs such as corn, pumpkins and oranges, have been eagerly welcomed. But tomatoes are not appreciated everywhere, and our attempt to introduce the Indian dhal has been only partially successful.

PUNCTILIO IN VILLAGE LIFE.

In many parts of the Territory the harvest was affected by the influenza epidemic, which caused many deaths and disorganized village life generally. Mr. Austen, the officer-in-charge of the Trobriand Islands, reports that the village of Sinaketa suffered from a lack of man power through the epidemic, and was short of food. The most obvious way to relieve the village people was to give them food, and the Assistant Resident Magistrate offered them 500 baskets of taitu. But no—the villagers would not accept anything, for to do so would be taken as an admission that they lacked skill as gardeners. They were told that they could pay for the food later on, but they still refused. "No argument of mine", says the Assistant Resident Magistrate, "could get them to accept the food, until, late in the afternoon, I had a brain wave, and asked them if I could make a Sagali (a ceremonial distribution of food) for the late big chief Todawada. Yes, I could do that; so they agreed to accept the 500 baskets as Sagali."

PRIZES FOR GARDENS, PLANTATIONS AND VILLAGES.

We award a prize for the best garden in a district, and also for the best plantation and the best village. The village prize is £5, which the village people spend as they please. Sometimes they buy garden tools, at other times a pig, and sometimes the money is distributed. The prize giving is made as formal as possible. Leading men make speeches, and quite good speeches, too, I am told, delivered without hesitation and even without very much repetition, and then there is a dance, and joy is unconfined until morning comes again.

The object of the garden and plantation prizes is, of course, to encourage native agriculture. One of our dreams, which we might have realized if the depression had spared us, was the establishment of an agricultural school for natives, somewhat on the lines of Fiji. Papua methods are perhaps suitable enough to the present native style of agriculture, but they could, of course, be vastly improved.

The prize for the best village is the most valued of all. Inavauni was the successful village in Mekeo this year, and was gaily decorated with coloured rami and kerchiefs. "A very clean and happy village was Inavauni", says the Assistant Resident Magistrate, "with crowds of small children playing about in it." This village has won the prize twice in the last three years.

In the Trobriands Deagila won the prize, and all the people from that village, with many from the villages round about, assembled in all their finery to celebrate the occasion. "It was a pretty sight", Mr. Austen says. "Before the dancing began all adult men and women were fallen in and a short speech made, and then the money was distributed to both men and women. The first dance was a 'gift dance', the dancers entering the circle with gifts hung on them." Apparently any one can take any of these gifts, the only restriction being that a man cannot take a gift from a woman. There is no return present made, and Mr. Austen says that this dance is "one of the few occasions when natives can truly be said to give without expecting a return."

DISTINCTION FOR MR. F. E. WILLIAMS—MY OWN VISIT TO SYDNEY.

Mr. F. E. Williams, our Government Anthropologist and a former Rhodes Scholar, has been awarded a Rockefeller fellowship, and has gone to study in Europe. We shall miss him for he gave us real assistance in native matters, and he had the gift, a very rare one in my experience, of being able himself to suggest the application of his scientific knowledge to practical administration, instead of leaving the adaptation to some one else. We shall be very glad to welcome Mr. Williams back again, but I think myself that he will be called to some higher position than anything we can offer him. In any event he will have the best wishes of us all in Papua.

On 1st December, 1932 :—

“ With the new issue of pictorials proving one of the most popular for years, and with the increased interest in the various varieties of the Lakatois, there seems little prospect of this strong demand working out for some considerable time.”

Gibbons Stamp Monthly, London, February, 1933.

In illustrating the series says :—

“ Twenty years ago British New Guinea, as it was then called, achieved some measure of popularity. It then waned in favour and not until recently has interest showed signs of a revival. This revival the Pictorial issue should definitely establish.”

The Philatelic Magazine, January, 1933.

In illustrating the series says :—

“ SO THIS IS PAPUA.

The new series from this outpost of Empire leaves no doubt as to the types of people that live there and how they live.”

For the financial year ended 30th June, 1933, the amount credited to the revenue for sale of stamps was £10,660. Of this amount the new stamps first placed on sale on 14th November, 1932, accounted for £7,293.

I have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's obedient servant,

(Sgd.) E. C. HARRIS, Treasurer.

His Excellency,

The Lieutenant-Governor,
Port Moresby.

NATIVE EDUCATION.

When, in 1920, subsidies from the Native Taxation Fund were first granted to Missions towards the cost of the education of natives conditional upon English being taught, the choice of English readers was left to the Missions. No two Missions chose the same readers, nor were the same ones necessarily in use in all the schools of any one Mission. It soon became apparent, both to inspector and teacher alike, that there should be a common reader and one that should appeal to the Papuan child.

In 1928 the Government published the illustrated *Papuan School Reader*, written by the Rev. W. J. Saville, of the London Missionary Society. This very fine book, admirably printed and bound by our Government Printer, and which would grace any school, unfortunately proved too far advanced for all but a very few of the native pupils. In 1932 Colonel J. Hooper, and Mr. C. L. Fox, of the Department of Public Instruction of Queensland, both of whom had visited Papua from time to time to inspect the work of the native schools, wrote, in collaboration, and with the assistance of Miss Milne (now Mrs. D. E. Ure) and Mr. Percy Chatterton, both of the London Missionary Society, the illustrated *Papuan Junior Readers*, Nos. 1, 2 and 3, together with instructions for teachers in the use of them. These readers, excellently printed and bound at the Government Printing Office, were issued in September, 1932.

While the books are framed much on the same lines as the reading books used in schools for Australian children they deal wholly with subjects with which any Papuan child is more or less familiar, and the illustrations are of animals and objects that he knows and of scenes taken from native life. The readers were received with much satisfaction by all the Missions and proved an immediate success. One teacher wrote “ . . . just what readers should be for our Papuan school children. My school children seem in the last month to have made an amazing advance in English and I put it down to these new books”. And another wrote to express his “ appreciation and gratitude for the splendid assistance these books will be to the scholars in our schools”.

In the August issue of *Bank Notes*, the magazine published by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, there is produced the facsimile of a letter written to the editor by a Papuan school-boy. The editor, *inter alia*, speaks of the “ very high standard of writing and composition attained by this boy in a language of which he knew nothing three years ago”.

Colonel Hooper, the Inspector from Queensland, as a result of his recent inspection of the schools, reports that the standard of reading has been very much raised and that the teachers are unanimous in their approval of the Junior Readers.

He found pupils who could recite English poetry ; read and quote Shakespeare ; perform plays in the English language, and they could answer intelligently, in English, questions he put them to test their knowledge of what they had read, recited or quoted. One pupil read Portia's speech and showed by his answers to the inspector's questions that he knew what it was all about.

From one school the thirteen pupils to be examined walked with their teacher sixteen miles to the coast to meet the inspector. It is gratifying to be able to record that the journey was well worth while. They all gained very high marks and the inspector was able to say of them that "all the pupils read and spoke English as though it were their native tongue".

Here and there there were, of course, defects, but they arose not from lack of zeal, but either because the would-be teachers had not been taught how to teach or because the number of pupils in the school were too many for the teaching staff provided.

The greatest successes were in the classes having trained teachers and a reasonable number of pupils. The inspector has no doubt at all that with the right teaching methods the average Papuan child can learn to read, write and speak English with no great difficulty.

Colonel Hooper was urged by some of the teachers to write a Junior Reader No. 4 and he intends to set about it immediately. Unfortunately, Colonel Hooper has made his last visit. We owe much to him and to Mr. Fox. Both of these gentlemen realized at once the value of a common language and that it should be English, and they have never wavered in their belief that it can be taught.

J. H. P. MURRAY,
Lieutenant-Governor.
