

1846.

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NEW SOUTH WALES

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ABORIGINES.

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REPLIES TO A CIRCULAR LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE  
CLERGY OF ALL DENOMINATIONS,

BY ORDER OF

THE SELECT COMMITTEE

ON THE

CONDITION OF THE ABORIGINES.

ORDERED BY THE COUNCIL, TO BE PRINTED,

31 OCTOBER 1846

SYDNEY

PRINTED BY W. W DAVIES, AT THE GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE,

BENT STREET.

EXTRACTS FROM THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

SESSION, 1845.

Votes, No. 10, Tuesday, 19 August, 1845.\*

10. Aborigines:-Mr Windeyer moved, pursuant to notice, that a Select Committee be appointed to consider the condition of the Aborigines, and the best means of promoting their welfare.

Question put and passed, and the following Committee appointed accordingly.

Mr. Windeyer,

Mr. Robinson,	Dr. Lang,
Mr. Bradley,	Mr. Bowman,
Mr. Lowe,	Dr. Nicholson
Mr. Suttor,	The Attorney General,

FIRST SESSION, 1846,

Votes, No. 19, Friday, 12 June 1846.

14. Aborigines:-Moved by Mr. Windeyer, pursuant to notice, That the Select Committee of last Session on Aborigines be re-appointed.

Question put and passed.

SECOND SESSION, 1846.

Votes, No. 31, Saturday, 31 October, 1846.

4. Aborigines:-Mr. Windeyer moved, pursuant to notice, That the Replies to a Circular Letter, on the subject of the condition of the Aborigines, addressed to the Clergy throughout the Colony, of all Denominations, by direction of the Select Committee of the Council on the Aborigines, appointed 19<sup>th</sup> August, 1845, and re-appointed 12<sup>th</sup> June, 1846, be printed.

Question put and passed.

REPLIES TO CIRCULAR LETTER.

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*Ministers of the Church of Scotland*

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\*For other Extracts from the Votes and Proceedings of the year 1845, relating to the Aborigines, see the Report of the Committee printed among the Proceedings of that year.

*REPLIES to a Circular Letter, addressed to the Clergy, of all Denominations, residing at too great a distance from Sydney to expect the favor of their personal attendance.*

*Legislative Council Chamber*

*Sydney, 17 February, 1846*

No. 45-5. (Circular.)

REVEREND SIR, I have the honor to request, that you will be pleased, at your earliest convenience, not later than the 15<sup>th</sup> April next, about which time the Council will meet, and the consideration of the subject be resumed, to favor the Committee appointed to enquire into and report upon the condition of the Aborigines, and the best means of promoting their welfare, with replies to the following queries, addressed to the Clerk of the Legislative Council.

I have the honor to be,

Your obedient humble Servant,

WM. MACPHERSON,

Clerk of the Legislative Council.

To \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the probable number of Aborigines in your district; distinguishing males, females and children?
2. Has the number diminished or increased, and if so, to what extent, within the last five or ten years?
3. Has the decrease been among the children or adults?
4. To what causes do you attribute the decrease in your district?
5. What is their actual condition and means of subsistence?
6. Has their ordinary means of subsistence diminished, and if so, what part of it, and from what causes; if it has increased, what part, and from what causes?
7. Have blankets been issued to the Aborigines in your district heretofore, and for what period? What was the effect of giving them? Has the giving of blankets ceased? When did it cease; and what has been the effect of its cessation? Would it be advisable to resume the distribution?
8. Have they been allowed or refused Hospital or Medical treatment in case of need; and in what manner; and, if allowed, at whose expense?
9. What proportion of them are either regularly or occasionally employed by the settlers, and in what way? In what manner are they remunerated?
10. What habits have they bearing upon their aptitude for employment?
11. Are there any, and how many, half-castes in your district? Are they living with, or after the manner of the Aborigines?
12. Is there any disposition on the part of the white labouring population, to amalgamate with the Aborigines, so as to form families.
13. Are the Aborigines in friendly or hostile relations with the settlers in your district; if hostile, how has the hostility arisen, and what collisions have taken place between the two races; what loss of life has there been; and in what manner has it taken place on either side?
14. What destruction of property has been occasioned by Aborigines?
15. What are the relations, hostile or otherwise, of the Aborigines among themselves in your district?
16. Are their numbers directly or indirectly affected by their hostilities, and to what extent?
17. Is Infanticide known among them?
18. Will you be good enough to state any facts relative to the Aborigines that would assist the Committee in its endeavour to promote their welfare?

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From the Reverend William Cowper, D. D., Minister of the Church of England, Sydney, 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1846:-

None of the Aborigines have permanently resided in the district of Sydney with the last five or ten years. In former years considerable numbers of the Aborigines lived in the neighbourhood of Sydney, and were much in the town; and I believe it is generally admitted, that the diminution and final disappearance of the tribes in this neighbourhood, were occasioned by learning and adopting the vicious habits of immoral Europeans, without acquiring any knowledge or apprehension of the fatal consequences, and without being subject to such legal restrictions or penalties as might have compelled them to live orderly, soberly, and industriously. If, therefore, the Aborigines could be so located as not to hold intercourse with such Europeans as would indulge or encourage them in the use of intoxicating liquors, or in other immoral practices, but be allowed such food and clothing only as would be conducive to their health, and be under such Magisterial control as to make them obedient subjects of the Crown, then would much be done towards their welfare.

(In Margin – Rev. W. Cowper, D. D. 6 April 1846.)

From the Reverend Robert Cartwright, Minister of the Church of England, Gunning, 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1846:-

In answer to the several queries contained in the Circular Letter of February last, regarding the Aborigines, it is my opinion, drawn from observation and enquiry-

1. That the number which belongs to the districts of Fish River and Lake George does not exceed about fifty.
2. That the number was formerly much greater than now, and that it has greatly diminished within the last ten years.
3. The decrease has principally been among the adults.
4. Which has, in a great measure, been owing to intemperate habits, acquired from the lowest classes of Europeans, as also from an insufficiency of food and clothing. I was informed by a Magistrate of the Territory, in the year 1840, that it came under his own observation, that as many as eight Aborigines had then lately died in the neighbourhood of Lake George, for want of the necessities of life; and that some of them had, under these circumstances, expressed a strong desire to find a place of rest.

5&6. The Fish River affords them a tolerable supply of fish in the season; and though opossums and other wild animals are not as plentiful as formerly, yet I am of opinion that this deficiency of food, occasioned by our occupying the country, is in some degree supplied by the provisions they obtain from the white people, especially when the blacks are willing to work, which is sometimes the case with both old and young.

7. I cannot learn that blankets have at any time been distributed in these parts by order of Government, but I consider it highly desirable it should be done, especially to the old and the afflicted in cold seasons.

8. The nearest hospital is in Goulburn, which does not contemplate the reception or relief of the black population. I can, however, confidently assert that medical attendance and medicine have been furnished them when applied for, by a private practitioner in this neighbourhood, and, as I am informed, have always been thankfully received by them.

9&10. In few instances will they remain in the service of the settlers, except when reared on the establishment or in a school. The love of a wandering, independent life prevents their settling anywhere to work, except for a short time, when compelled by want of food and clothing, and encouraged by kind treatment.

11. There are several half-castes, principally children, with the tribes in these districts; I cannot say how many.

12. I have formally observed among the whites a disposition to amalgamate with the civilized half-castes, and I have known some good wives and careful mothers from amongst the Aborigines.

13. The black and white population appear to live upon amicable terms, nor have I known anything to the contrary since my residence here.

14. There has not been any destruction of property occasioned by the blacks in this neighbourhood for many years.

15&16. The most friendly intercourse seems to exist among the different tribes in these districts.

17. I never heard of their destroying their children in these parts, and think the number of half-castes among them is a proof they do not.

18. In reply to your last article of enquiry, it is my opinion, that the most simple and effectual means by which the welfare of the Aborigines can be promoted, are such as the following. Let an asylum, under proper regulations, be established in every district or county, for the reception and relief of the sickly, the infirm, and the aged, where their wants should be relieved, and where those of their own race, who would work for the benefit of their needy and helpless brethren, should be rewarded and encouraged by food and blankets being given to them, or, occasionally, some articles of clothing. Their children also should be received into this asylum, and "trained up in the way they should go." Parents might be induced to leave their children here, by the offer of some kind of reward, and by seeing that they were fed and taken care of.

I have known, during my residence in the Colony, many useful servants, both in the house and in the field, taken from this abject race of mankind; proving that, however degraded and neglected, they are possessed of the same capacity for

improvement as ourselves. And who can doubt but that if Government had persevered in this charitable work, our Colony might now have enjoyed the reward of justice and beneficence, in the useful labours of this neglected and injured race, instead of having suffered, in our life and property, from their lawless violence?

Should it then be determined by our Colonial Government, after full enquiry into this important subject, to adopt some plan as here suggested, and especially in regard to that which contemplates the benefit of the children of the Aborigines; and should it be willing to extend the same favour to them as shown to the children of the worst of Europeans – allowing for their maintenance and education an average cost of the expense of the orphan children. I have reason to believe I can find proper persons to undertake the care and instruction of such children on such terms.

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From the Reverend John Cross, Port Macquarie, Minister of the Church of England, 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1846:-

1. My son says there are not more than a hundred now; when we first came, I believe there were more than five times that number.
2. The number has diminished. We came to Port Macquarie, February 28, 1828.
3. Both, to an alarming extent; particularly the children.
4. Connexion with the whites I believe to be the principal cause.
5. Their condition is pitiable; they live by hunting and fishing, and upon the spontaneous produce of the ground.
6. A small part has diminished, arising from the portion of the Territory now cultivated or occupied by the Colonists.
7. Heretofore they were, I think, for nine or ten years; they used to exchange their blankets for rum.
8. They know the value of medicine; have occasionally had advice from the hospital, and sometimes beg physic from the Settlers.
9. Two or three are employed in the Town to carry small parcels; I cannot say how they are remunerated.
10. None that I know of, but bringing fish.
11. There are a few, I think not more than six; should they be reared they must live with us, or the blacks would kill them.
12. Only Bangor; I never heard of anyone else.
13. The Aborigines in this District are not hostile.
14. None that I know of.
15. They are peaceable, but diseased.
17. Yes, especially half-castes.
18. The subject of the Aborigines is most interesting to the philanthropic mind, especially to those who are sojourning more immediately among them; but, at the same time, the question of benefiting them is most intricate.

When we first landed at Sydney from England, in the year 1819, the blacks were very numerous about the Town, (such a Town, however, as it was then.) Good old Governor Macquarie at that time interested himself considerably about the welfare of the Aborigines. It was thought little hopes were to be entertained of those who had arrived at the age of maturity, and whose wild manners and habits were fixed, and inseparably connected them with the bush; but that if they could be prevailed on to allow their children to be instructed it might lead to the amendment of their condition.

Accordingly a School for Aborigines was established at Parramatta, superintended by a Mr. Shelly, which seemed to go on well for a length of time; several of the children could say the Lord's Prayer, and began to read a little; but in time they were stolen away by their parents, and taken into the bush.

Again it was thought that if the adults with families could be induced to stay in a place for the sake of some little indulgences, &c., other Natives, seeing them comfortable, would desire to follow their example. With this view Black Town was formed, but after a while that establishment was broken up; and also another made, I believe, by the Church Missionary Society, at Wellington Valley, failed also; so that however good the design of benefiting the blacks, the question how it is to be performed is a most difficult one.

It may be that the failures in some degree have been the effect of mismanagement, and after the mass of information which will consequently be collected by the Honorable Council, with the Almighty's blessing, some plan of essential service to them may be yet found out, which on their account, if consistent with the Divine will, we would humbly pray that it may be speedily realized.

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From the Reverend Thomas Hassall, M.A., Minister of the Church of England, Denbigh, 30<sup>th</sup> March, 1846

1. Unknown. I believe they are nearly extinct in this District. Those who occasionally visit it belong to Camden and Burragorang.
2. I believe the number has greatly diminished, but I have no data for ascertaining that point.
3. The decrease has been in both children and adults.
4. In a very great measure to the vices introduced by Europeans, particularly those of drunkenness and immorality.
5. Their actual condition is that of the greatest degradation, and their means of subsistence is very limited, although I am not aware that any have died through want of food.
6. Their ordinary means of subsistence, has of course diminished, through the cultivation of the soil and destroying their food, by hunting and shooting the animals which gave them subsistence. When I visited this District, about forty years since, numbers of Kangaroo were to be seen within a few miles of this spot; now, comparatively speaking, none are to be found.
7. I am not aware that blankets have been issued in these Districts. I think however, it would be advisable to issue them, but they should be branded, and no person allowed to purchase them, nor should they be issued near public houses, as draymen, and others entice the Natives in, and make them intoxicated, and buy their blankets. If the Clergy had the issuing of them, and taking their names, &c., it might be of service to obtain something like a census with little trouble.
8. I am not aware that they have been allowed or refused medical attendance; we have no hospitals in our District. From myself and other landholders, particularly the Messieurs Macarthur, they have always received medicine when they required it.
9. The only person I know of, who has been enabled to employ them occasionally, is John Wild, Esquire, M.C., who feeds and remunerates them when they work for him in husking corn. My brother, Mr. James Hassall, and others here, have had two or three at a time, who have been extremely useful in the care of horses and cattle, until the period of knocking out their teeth, when invariably they have been compelled to leave their service. In one instance of an Aborigine at Dr. Reed's, who would not leave, he was killed by the natives for it.
10. Their habits would fit them well for pastoral employment, provided they could be removed from the influence of their own tribe.
11. More than one-half of the children are half-castes; there are a few who have grown up and are living after the manner of the Aborigines.
12. I conceive not. They cohabit with them, but in no instance am I aware of their remaining any time together.
13. They are all friendly in these districts.
14. None that I know of.
15. Unknown.
16. Doubtless they are, but to no great extent.
17. I am not certain.
18. From the attempt made at Black Town, I am assured that great good might be effected by persevering industry and education, provided suitable means and persons could be obtained to manage an establishment for them; the failure of that at Black Town arose from the want of good soil to cultivate, and proper persons to conduct it; in fact just as the boys and girls grew up to puberty, the school was abandoned, the girls were married to the most worthless of convict men, and with one exception turned out ill. That exception is a person living near Black Town whose husband is a sawyer; she has a large family and is very industrious, taking in the timber herself with one of the children to Windsor to prevent her husband going and getting drunk. The Reverend Mr. Walker I think could name several who have been instructed and done well, that is, have been useful and industrious. One that the Rev. Mr. Marsden took great pains with, who from the dire influence of the convicts behaved very ill and ran away from him at Rio, returned and died in the hospital at Sydney, a true penitent. I write from my own certain knowledge, that the intercourse and vice of Europeans have been the great bane and destruction of the race; I recollect the time when on the Parramatta River two or three small fleets of canoe, well made of bark, with two or three or more in each canoe, with nets, fishing lines, spears &c., of their own making, were to be seen daily, but where are they now? There was likewise a fine race of men at the Hawkesbury and in those districts, but they have nearly all disappeared.

I think that much good might be effected by appointing depots, under certain regulations, in the different counties, where they might have, so long as they remained, a daily ration, encouraging them to do a little labour, and giving them something extra for it, such as tea, sugar and tobacco. This I conceive is due from us to them, and the expense if properly attended to would be amply repaid by their being near at hand, to assist the constables and others in discovering stolen property, as well as by their obtaining habits of industry, which otherwise I see no prospect of ever obtaining.

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From the Reverend M. D. Meares, M.A., Minister of the Church of England, Wollongong, 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1846:-

1. Males 34, females 40, children 19; of these 8 are black, 11 half-caste.
  2. In 1837 there were I believe upwards of 350 Aborigines in this district.
  3. The decrease has been pretty equal in adults and children.
  4. To the fact of them having from associating much with the worst characters, among the white population, imbibed most of their vices, without any of their redeeming qualities.
  5. Their moral condition is, from the causes stated above in the reply to query No. 4, worse than before they were exposed to the degrading effects of such association.  
Their means of subsistence are fully adequate to their wants; whether derived from their ordinary pursuits of hunting and fishing, or in exchange for such services as they are able and willing to render to settlers.
  6. The improved parts of the district, afford more extensive hunting grounds than the present diminished numbers of the Aborigines require; the fish are as abundant as ever, and they can earn a something occasionally from the settlers.
  7. Blankets have heretofore been issued by the Government to the Aborigines; the effects produced were 1<sup>st</sup> – an increase of their comforts, and the preservation of their health; 2<sup>nd</sup> – a partial incitement towards civilization by an increase of their wants. No blankets have been issued since 1844; the effects have been an increased mortality, particularly among the males; and much dissatisfaction among the survivors, with considerable suffering from rheumatic affections and colds. I would strongly recommend an immediate return to the former practice of distribution.
  8. Bundel, a native of Illawarra, died in Hospital in Sydney some two years ago; in no other instance has medical assistance, within my knowledge, been sought for.
  9. There are two or three who are frequently employed by the settlers in Illawarra, but for irregular periods; and they receive wages and rations as other men.
  10. They have no habits, of which I am cognizant, bearing upon aptitude for employment of a laborious character; if it were otherwise, I am of the opinion that their muscular development would be much greater than I have ever witnessed it, except in rare instances.
  11. There are two or three adult half-castes who live as do the Aborigines, and with them.
  12. There is no desire on behalf of the white labouring population to amalgamate, in a *legitimate* way, with the Aborigines; cases have occurred in which white men, working among the mountains, as cedar cutters, have cohabited with black women for months together; in one instance for two years, but the connexion has always ceased immediately on their return to a settled part of the district.
  13. The Aborigines in this district are peaceable in their habits, and generally well disposed.
  14. None whatever.
  15. Generally of a friendly character.
  16. One man was killed in a private quarrel by his own brother, about two years ago.
  17. It is altogether denied by the Aborigines of this district, and I have never heard of an instance of it among them.
  18. From my limited acquaintance of the habits of the Aborigines I cannot state any facts which could assist the Committee in its endeavour to promote their welfare; but I am of opinion that their children, in no way deficient in intellect, are capable of a high state of moral culture. I have never met with any people endowed to the same extent with the ability to acquire a knowledge of the English language; indeed, I feel convinced that if the paternal care, which a Government is upon every principle, bound to extend to all classes of its subjects, had been raised to a respectable level, instead of being sunk, in a great measure from neglect, to a state the most degraded; what course is best calculated to benefit them now is not easy to be ascertained, but something at least ought to be attempted; a long debt is due to those people from the inhabitants of European descent; and whatever the legislature can do for their religious improvement, their temporal comfort, or the education of their children, will, I am persuaded, be well and wisely expended.
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From the Reverend C. P. N. Wilton, M.A., Minister of the Church of England, Newcastle, 1<sup>st</sup> May 1846:-

1. The number of Aborigines in my district consists of male adults 20, boys 2; female adults 5, girls 2; total 29. There are no children belonging to the Newcastle Tribe under eleven years of age; and of the adult females, four out of the five are becoming old and infirm.
2. The number has diminished in the last ten years, certainly by one-half.
3. The decrease has been among the adults. *McGill*, the Aboriginal Chief of this tribe, by whose assistance the Rev. L. E. Threlkeld compiled his grammar of its dialect, on my speaking to him lately, but a few days before his death, upon this subject, remarked that "*they died off like sheep.*"
5. I attribute the decrease of the Aborigines in this district to their own customs, which tend to their depopulation – to drunkenness, debauchery, and disease, especially among the *females*, induced by their connexion with the white population, as well as in the town of Newcastle, as upon the neighbouring farms, and by the introduction of *small pox* and *measles*, a few years ago, which carried off many of them. May not the christian discover also, *another* reason for the decrease of the Aboriginal population of *New Holland*, as well as that of the other islands in this southern hemisphere, open to missions, where no personal violence is offered to them by the European residents? May he not find it in the prophecy of *Noah*, in *Genesis*, chap. IX, and 27 verse, "*God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem?*"
5. They are dependent upon the *towns-people* and *settlers* for any old clothing they can get. They will work *occasionally* about a house, especially if that house be an *inn*, where they may meet with opportunities of obtaining money or ardent spirits from those who frequent it; and on a *farm*, in pulling maize or *burning off*, for *money* or *rations*.
6. Their *ordinary* means of subsistence has greatly diminished: the *Emu*, *Kangaroo*, *Wallibi*, and *Opossum*, having almost disappeared from their hunting grounds. *Fish*, and a Zoophyte which they call "*Kon-je-voi*", and which they obtain on the sea coast, are the only kinds of *animal* food, yet left to them in any abundance. Of vegetable food they still procure, when they can get nothing else to satisfy the cravings of hunger, a native root of a kind of *yam* called by them "*Ko-ka-bai*," and the seeds of the *Zania*, which they eat, first soaking them in water, then roasting them, and subsequently beating them to a fine powder. They also suck the "*Mi-mal*," or the honey in the blossoms of the Honeysuckle tree, and that of the *Grass tree*, where it can be now met with, and in the season, when ripe, the fruit of the "*Mesembryanthemum aquilaterall*" or "*Pigs' faces.*"
7. Blankets had been issued to the Aborigines in my district, from the commencement of the administration of His Excellency Sir R. Bourke, until the last two years. The effect of giving them was manifest in the satisfaction expressed by the blacks at the kindness of the Europeans, in thus providing for their comfort. No blankets have been issued to the Aborigines of this tribe for the last two winters; they would be very thankful if the issue of them were renewed. When the distribution of the blankets ceased, "*McGill*," the late chief, told me "*they all cursed the Governor.*" They were indeed much dissatisfied. They now depend upon obtaining any *old* blanket, or coat that may be offered them by the settlers; while of getting these, they are by no means *certain*, and failing in obtaining such, they would have to betake themselves to the shelter of *bark*. I am decidedly of opinion that it would be desirable to resume the distribution of blankets to these people; the *least* indeed, that can be done for them on the part of those who have deprived them of the animals, the fur of which, they were wont to make themselves cloaks. Several individuals of this tribe have lately enquired of me, why "*the Governor does not give them blankets to wear in winter, when it is murry cold.*" Public decency moreover, would be consulted, by continuing their distribution.
8. The sick Aborigines of this tribe have in *every* instance, been admitted into H. M. General Hospital, whenever they were *willing* to be admitted. The expenses consequent upon their medical treatment being defrayed by the Colonial Government. But there is an *almost general* abhorrence amongst these Aborigines of entering a public hospital; for what reason, I have not been able to ascertain. Probably, however, it may be from their extreme dislike at being *watched* by the whites, and being kept under hospital restraint – a mode of treatment so much opposed to their own ideas, and habits of freedom. It has indeed to my knowledge, that although offers have been made to the blacks, to erect huts outside the walls of the *General Hospital* for their use, yet they could not be induced to *go near them*, choosing rather to run the risk of a cure at the hands of their own "*Ka-ra-kal*," – *doctor* or *sorcerer*.
9. The greater part of the Aborigines are *occasionally* employed by the inhabitants of the town, and the settlers, either about the house, in going upon errands, or on the farms, in gathering in the maize in season, and in *burning off*. They receive payment for their work, either by a ration, or by money, as may be agreed upon. *Generally*, they work for their food, and any old clothing.
10. They are expert in catching fish, and quick in going upon errands, if they be sure of receiving payment; but in general they are inactive, and lazy. An exception, however, is to be found in "*Brown*", who, to the honor of *Newcastle*, (or *Munibinba* - its aboriginal name) belongs to this tribe, and who accompanied *Dr. Leichhardt*

on his late expedition from *Moreton Bay* to *Port Essington*. This “*Brown*” is a most intelligent Aborigine, and had previously to his accompanying that intrepid explorer, been employed as a seaman in a whaler, and had, some few years before, acted as a servant about a house in Newcastle, approving himself in activity and honesty equal to any European of his own age. Another black, also belonging to this tribe, now about twenty years of age, makes a most useful and trustworthy servant, having charge of his master’s horses; and a lad, about fifteen years old, shows himself very expert in riding about on horseback after cattle, the property of his employer, a settler in this district – exceptions these to the *general* habits of the black population.

11. There are two *half-castes* belonging to this tribe, one lad, and one girl. The boy is employed about a farm; the girl, as a nursemaid in a family in Newcastle.
12. There is none whatever.
13. The Aborigines in this district are on perfectly friendly relations with the settlers.
14. None, to my knowledge.
15. The Aborigines in my district are quite peaceable amongst themselves.
16. The numbers are neither directly nor indirectly affected by any hostilities among themselves, being (as I have before stated) on good terms with each other.
17. “*McGill*” has told me that it was usual to destroy the *half-caste male* infants, but he could recollect only two cases in which *infant black* have been killed – one by strangling and the other by throwing it into the surf of the sea, and then beating it to death with a waddy; when I put the question to him upon this subject, he replied – “they used to do it, but no kill infants now.”
18. From what I have seen of the Aborigines during the fifteen years in which I have been resident in Newcastle, I am convinced, that *any good* to be done amongst them in a moral and civilizing point of view, must be commenced with the *children*. When the adults in this tribe, as in others with which it has been my lot to fall in during my clerical tours in the different parts of the Hunter, contaminated by the debauchery of the white population – drunk with ardent spirits; added to this, naturally filthy, and indolent in their habits, *very little good*, humanly speaking, can be expected to be accomplished. “*McGill*”, although for a long time domesticated at the Mission House, Lake Macquarie, presents a melancholy instance of the failure of Christian philanthropy exerted on behalf of this degraded race; ever since the breaking up of that Mission, like the less-instructed adults of his tribe, he was seldom to be found sober, whenever the means of obtaining intoxicating liquors came in his way. The opinion respecting the Aborigines near Parramatta, which I formed as far back as the year 1828, and which I published in the “*Australian Quarterly Journal*” of that year, experience has fully confirmed, in regard to any moral good to be looked for from any tribe of Aborigines having intercourse with the Europeans. Speaking of the School for Aborigines at *Black Town*, near Parramatta, a long time since broken up, I said, “*Children from three to six years of age* should, if possible, be obtained from their parents, and admitted into the school.” No coercive measures, however, should be exercised; but the motives which lead to their being taken away, and the sincerity of those who undertake their instruction, should be carefully explained to their parents or friends. These children, placed under the charge of a master and mistress of well-known morality of conduct and zeal, tempered with discretion, should be watched with the greatest strictness – be taught to read and speak the English language – be duly instructed in the nature of any guilt committed, and punished according to its magnitude; and as they grew up to years of maturity, the advantages of domestic comfort should be constantly set before them. By adopting such a method, we are of opinion that one favourable point at least will have been obtained. That these little ones would not, at so early an age, have imbibed the bad principles and conduct of their parents, and that consequently the Teacher would contend merely with the *natural* disposition, independent of the acquired and increasing *habit*. By the adoption of such a plan, with the addition of what I had before stated, *viz.*, that they should be instructed in “the nature of the Christian Religion – the being of a God – the atonement of a Saviour, &c., &c.” many of the natives, especially the females, might be rescued from their degraded mode of living, and eventually become moral and useful members of society. I would here also add, that the Aborigines, to who I have alluded in my reply to query 10, received instruction when *children* – hence their present adherence to the service of their respective employers, and their comparatively sober and industrious habits.

I would here again repeat what I have already stated in my reply to the 7<sup>th</sup> query. I would strongly recommend the *renewal of the issue of blankets* to the Aborigines, for the reasons I have therein assigned. And further, to prevent in future the disposal to the whites of such blankets thus issued, I would suggest, that each blanket should be branded with some distinguishing mark, not the *broad arrow alone, in several places*, and that a law should be passed enacting it a  *misdemeanour* for any white person to have such in his possession. This would in some measure have a tendency towards checking the hitherto too common practice, among *some* of the blacks, of selling or exchanging these articles, given them for their own *personal* comfort.

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From the Reverend John Vincent, Minister of the Church of England, Castlereagh Parsonage, near Penrith, 13 April, 1846:-

In reply to your Circular, of the 17<sup>th</sup> February last, requesting my answers to the several queries contained in it, respecting the Aboriginal Natives, I have the honor to say, that I should most willingly have afforded you the desired information, had there been a tribe of the blacks permanently living within, or at seasons migrating to my district. I know of only one Aboriginal Native, an inoffensive aged man, who obtains his means of support, and clothing, from the inhabitants, and for which he renders them occasionally some trivial services.

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From the Reverend Henry T. Stiles, M.A., Minister of the Church of England, Windsor, 1<sup>st</sup> May 1846.

I should feel great pleasure in offering a detailed reply to the series of questions respecting the condition of the Aborigines in this district, with which I have been honored by the Committee, if I were in possession of any valuable information on the subject. This, however, is not the case. A residence in Windsor, to which place I have been confined by the duties of my sacred calling, for several years, has afforded me no opportunities of investigating the habits of the blacks. From the town and immediate neighbourhood of Windsor, they have almost entirely disappeared; their numbers, according to recent enquiries, being only *two* men in Windsor, *three* in Richmond and *five* in Curryjong. Their numbers were greatly diminished about five years ago, by an epidemic said to be 'measles', which carried off a great many. The condition of the few survivors is miserable enough, living by begging from the settlers, who are generally kind to them indeed, but from whom they obtain no settled maintenance. No blankets have been served out, at Windsor, for some years past. Why the old practice was discontinued I am not aware; but I cannot but state my opinion that its resumption would be advantageous, not only as adding directly to the comfort of the scattered few of the original inhabitants, but also, as affording them some assurance that the English Government entertain a kindly feeling towards them.

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From the Reverend George K. Rusden, M.A., Minister of the Church of England, East Maitland, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1846:-

Living in a town where the Aborigines seldom, or never come, I have it not in my power to give you the information you require. I do not presume to offer an opinion without a knowledge of the facts of the case; but it has always appeared to me a pity that the Government did not recognize a head of each tribe, and support his authority for the punishment of misdemeanours committed by members of it. Our present process of law is unintelligible to them, and therefore can produce no moral or social effect; but habits of self-regulation, and an interval government among themselves, might lead to improvement, and a safer intercourse. By such a system, the Aborigines would, in most cases, be tried by their peers, which is the pride and privilege of our English law and liberties.

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From the Reverend James Gunther, Minister of the Church of England, Parsonage, Mudgee, 18<sup>th</sup> April 1846:-

I beg to observe, that my answers will be of a more general nature, respecting the Aborigines, not confined to this immediate locality or district, but comprising, in some respects, the surrounding districts – I mean such as have been inhabited for a number of years by the white population; for having not resided here more than two years and a few months, I could not furnish a very accurate statement, as regards the numbers, &c., of the Aboriginal inhabitants of the Mudgee district; but having, for upwards of six years, resided at Wellington, and frequently travelled, during a period of nearly nine years, in all the surrounding districts, sometimes with the particular object of visiting and conversing with the Aborigines, and at all times taken more or less notice of them, I deem it my

duty to furnish such information as I have been able to gather during this period, bearing upon the enquiries of the Committee of the Legislative Council.

1. The number of Aborigines in this district I calculate to be from fifty to sixty. I consider there are about four males to three females, and one-fifth the whole number children.
2. For the last five years the decrease must have been about fifty percent.
3. The decrease by deaths, has been chiefly among adults, especially the younger adults. The decrease in births is also considerable.
4. Irregular and disorderly habits cause various diseases, and prove the main cause of the decrease. Young and able men in particular, being from time to time employed by the settlers, and continually changing their mode of living from partially civilized to savage habits, and *vice versa*, by their irregularity in many instances catch severe colds, get rheumatic pains, &c.; by neglect and careless treatment, these colds and other diseases, thus contracted, often prove fatal, either immediately or gradually. Both liver complaint and consumption are not unfrequent upon them. The venereal, I regret to say, often obtains its victims from among the blacks, especially the younger females. The disorderly conduct of almost all Aboriginal women is likely to render births as scarce as they are.
5. At a superficial view it would appear, that the actual condition of the Aborigines is more favourable than it would have been in times past. No doubt they might be better off, if they chose, but I do not consider they really are. To their ordinary means of subsistence, chiefly consisting in hunting, are added the provision of civilized man and European luxuries; but this addition has, no doubt increased their wants and desires, and they have not sufficient energy, or industry, to avail themselves fully of these advantages; nor do they seem to be diligent and vigorous enough, now, in hunting and other pursuits, to supply themselves with an abundance of food, from their natural resources. Those who have lived long among Europeans are, evidently, no longer that hardy race they once were, and have, in a measure, lost that rude, but interesting simplicity, peculiar to savages. Their indolence induces them, too frequently, to go begging, or to earn a scanty supply of European food by attending to little errands, rather than to make exertion or to submit to regular labor. Too often, also, Aborigines live on, what I would term, the wages of sin.
6. Their ordinary means of subsistence have no doubt diminished, by the improvements of civilization, and depasturing of our livestock, both as regards game and nutritious roots, but no more in proportion, than their numbers have diminished; besides, European provision available to them would more than compensate their losses.
7. Blankets have hitherto been issued, but, I believe, are to be discontinued in this district; the chief beneficial effect of distributing blankets to the Aborigines, in my opinion, has been that, as a demonstration of kind feelings toward them, it gave them a favourable impression towards the Colonial Government, yet, I fear, they have gradually become accustomed to look upon the boon as matter of right. Excepting a few instances of old and infirm persons, who should receive them not at stated times, but when in need of them, I consider it not advisable to continue or resume the practice of issuing blankets annually to the Aborigines; it only tends to encourage their indolence, and they too often barter them away for trifling remunerations to Europeans, if not in immediate want of them. Those who are strong and healthy can either obtain blankets and other clothing from the Colonists for work, or they may easily collect a sufficient number of Opossum skins, by hunting, to make cloaks.
8. Private individuals now and then supply them with medicines; in some instances, I have also known medical gentlemen, gratuitously, out of compassion, or by the solicitation of friends, to give them medical assistance. Various cases have come to my knowledge where proper medical and hospital treatment would have been most desirable; but it being generally believed that the Colonial Government has made no provision for this object, people rarely think of applying for it. I am not aware of any application or refusal of the kind.
9. Most of the men, especially the young, are, occasionally, employed by the settlers, in various ways, such as cutting bark, breaking wood, fetching water and little errands, also some in sheep washing; a few also will, for a short time – rarely for some months together, go shepherding, or they drive bullocks, fetch horses, &c. They are usually remunerated in food, clothing, tobacco; in some instances, they have also received money, of which, however, they rarely make good use. Instances do occur, but not often, when they are imposed upon, and not sufficiently remunerated to encourage them in work; but, generally speaking, they are as well remunerated as they deserve. The most ample remuneration does not prove a sufficient stimulus to them for regular work, or an encouragement to prefer our way of living for a continuance; females are rarely employed.
10. Their unsettled and wandering habits, together with their natural laziness, prevent them from being really useful, so as to depend on them, for any continuance of time. But when inclined, they do not want a certain degree of ability and skill to do almost all kinds of work; I have known various instances in which as much aptitude for work was shown as with Europeans.
11. About one-third of the children are half-caste, and usually live with, and like, the Aborigines.

12. Some solitary instances of such a disposition have come to my knowledge, but, in general, those men who will cohabit with Aboriginal females, when opportunity offers, care little or nothing for the offspring, if there be any.
13. The Aborigines are in friendly relation in this and the neighbouring districts, with the white population.
14. None that I am aware of.
15. In general, the Aborigines of the same district belonging to one tribe, or neighbouring tribes, live peaceably among themselves, with only occasional interruptions, by feuds arising chiefly through females.
16. Hostilities with more distant tribes do not unfrequently occur, but of late years do not very often lead to fatal results, or decrease in their numbers.
17. I am not certain of any particular case of infanticide having been perpetrated, but have, in some instances, had grounds for suspicion; they carefully conceal such outrages from white people, especially the more respectable classes. In an indirect manner, however, that is to say, by gross and culpable neglect, I fear the life of many an Aboriginal child has been sacrificed.
18. I fear very little or nothing can be done for the welfare of these Aborigines, who seem to care less for any kind of improvement, and are more devoid of reflection, than any other known race of the human species, very rare instances excepted. Unless it should please God, to change their disposition, in some marvellous manner, or to raise some extraordinary man to labor, as Missionary, among them, with more than usual self-denial and perseverance, tact and zeal, their case seems to be hopeless, all ordinary efforts either by Missionaries and Protectors, or private individuals having, hitherto, almost entirely failed. Whatever improvements they may have made, either in civilized habits, or general and religious knowledge, they usually will in the course of time, return to their savage life. They seem to put no value on any advantage or comfort held out to them. The elderly men, at the same time, are determined, by all means in their power, as if acting under some conspiracy, to oppose every real improvement, or departure from savage life, in the rising generation. The females, are, as a matter of course, kept in a kind of bondage; and when boys have grown up to approach the age of young men, and have, by some mysterious ceremony, been constituted young men, "they are as if enlisted and sworn" to their masters, under the arbitrary control of the old men, obliged to submit to various absurd customs, continuing in this state for some years; nay, they are not fully released from their servitude till they themselves grow old, and rule in the same manner. To give more effect to their domination, the elderly men contrive to appropriate to themselves the younger females, and thereby hold out a kind of allurements to the young men. These in most instances must obtain their wives from the old men, nor is the woman allowed to the young man as his own, but sometimes only lent. In fine, the Aboriginal woman is almost invariably treated like an article of commerce, and as such handed about among black and white. This is one of the greatest obstacles or drawbacks to reclaim effectually any Aboriginal youth, male or female.

The young men are likewise compelled, if ever so willing to stay with settlers, to go frequently, at the bidding of the rulers, with messages to other tribes, or on fighting excursions.

For the present, therefore, I see no possibility, by ordinary means, by persuasion, or encouragement, to improve these Aborigines, and to promote their welfare, unless some compulsory or restrictive measures could be adopted towards them, which, however arbitrary and illiberal they may appear, are alone likely to have some beneficial effect; nay, their very existence, as a race, it appears to me, will depend on some such measures. Were, for instance, every tribe confined to its own district, or every young and able man obliged to hire with settlers, and in case of begging and idling about, treated under the Vagrant Act, some good might be accomplished. It would also be of advantage if polygamy, and the tyrannical ruling of the old men, were interfered with, by authority. But if such measures would seem to be impracticable, there is one restriction, at least, which I consider practicable and most desirable, and would scarcely fail to lead to good results; I mean, if the Aborigines were prevented from warlike preparations and demonstrations, from settling their own disputes and taking revenge, by feuds and duels. I expect (and I ground my expectations on certain facts which I have witnessed) that if the Aborigines were given to understand, they were no longer allowed to engage in fights of any kind, on peril of their being imprisoned and punished, and such a determination, if need be, demonstrated to them in but a few instances, they would soon give up their warlike proceedings. The prevention of direct mischief they may do, by their warlike engagements, would be the smallest good achieved by such a measure; the greater good would be that it would put a stop, to a great extent, to their frequent excursions and migratory propensities, and produce more steady habits.

It is also truly desirable that crimes committed by the blacks, not only against the whites, but between themselves, ought never, when the main facts of the commission of crime, and the person of the offender, can be ascertained, to be allowed to pass entirely unpunished, merely on account of some legal difficulties in the proceedings, or technical objections, because, perhaps, the offender cannot be tried in the regular form of law. A mitigation of the more rigorous punishment pointed out by the law might, in most instances, remove our scruples concerning justice. I need scarcely add, that the adoption of some such measures, which I have taken the liberty to allude to, would do away in some degree, with the present anomaly of considering the Aborigines of this Colony as British subjects, and yet permitting them, in too many instances, even in those parts where British authority has long been

established, to act according to their own laws and customs; the consideration of leniency and humane forbearance, evidently implied in this connivance, cannot ultimately benefit the Aborigines, and however desirable for a time, it may not be premature now to discontinue it; nor does its discontinuance appear impracticable in those parts of the Colony which are peopled to some extent by the whites, and where courts of justice are established. Having been prompted by a deep interest I feel in the Aborigines, and a sincere wish for their welfare, to avail myself fully of the opportunity now afforded, in having these queries proposed to me, to express freely my views, grounded on observations and facts, I trust I shall not be considered as presuming to intrude my advice, any further than to throw out some hints, which might possibly assist the Committee of the Legislative Council, in devising certain measures to promote the welfare of the Aborigines, or, if no restrictions can be imposed constitutionally, to satisfy in a measure the consciences of the Honorable Members of Council, that it is beyond the reach of the Legislature to confer any real benefit on this unfortunate race of men.

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From the Reverend George Augustus Middleton, Minister of the Church of England, Morpeth, 10<sup>th</sup> April 1846:-

1. The number amounts to twenty-three, comprising fifteen adult males, five adult females, and three children, (males.)
2. The number of Aborigines at the present time, I consider, does not embrace more than one-third of what they were ten years ago.
3. The decrease has been principally among the adults; a birth is now of very rare occurrence.
4. I attribute the great decrease to several causes; first, hostilities among the tribes; secondly, the native pox; and thirdly, the influenza, the effects of which are now very seriously aggravated by want of necessary shelter, under such circumstances, during the night.
5. Their condition is one neither of independence or dependence. The rivers, lagoons, and forests, continue to afford a portion of what is necessary to their support; the settlers supply, in remuneration for occasional trifling services, the deficiency.
6. Their ordinary means of subsistence has seriously diminished, and is daily diminishing; this is attributable to two causes, - first, a general clearance of the brushes; secondly, the draining of the lagoons. Kangaroos, long since, sought the protection of the neighbouring mountains.
7. I understand the annual distribution of blankets, which had been regularly for several years, (the exact number I do not know) ceased in the year 1844, thereby depriving the Aborigines of what they regarded, as much contributing to their personal comfort. I would most earnestly and most respectfully recommend the annual issue, to each of the Aborigines, of one frock, one shirt, and one pair of trousers; as also, the revival of the distribution of blankets as the most acceptable and useful presents; I believe the Aborigines, generally speaking, are little disposed to part with those articles now become essential to their comfort and health.
8. I am not aware that medical provision has been made to meet their necessities, but can bear personal testimony to the readiness with which they are disposed to take medicine, from the hands of any one in whom they repose confidence. The appointment of a medical gentlemen, in different localities, for the purpose of providing the Aborigines with medicine, and necessary support during illness would, I think, prove highly beneficial; should this suggestion be carried out, an instruction might be given to the police generally, to conduct the Aborigines, so afflicted, to any neighbouring hospital, or to the residence of the medical gentleman engaged as above suggested.
9. During the year perhaps every adult has occasionally been of some trifling service to the settlers, in husking maize, cutting wood, or carrying water; their remuneration consists in a supply of food, while so engaged, to an extent far beyond the value of the assistance afforded.
10. Not any perceptible one.
11. There are two half-castes living with the Aborigines.
12. Not any.
13. The Aborigines have long been, and continue to be, on a very friendly footing with the settlers; their scarcity of numbers has great influence on their behaviour.
14. Not any.
15. Very Friendly.
16. Numbers of the natives are now very little affected by hostilities; when labouring under the influence of spirituous liquors, there is ever serious danger of fatal result.
17. Infanticide I believe to be very common among them; when I first arrived at Newcastle, in 1822, every male half-caste was destroyed as soon as born; in one or two instances only, were female infants spared.
18. I have ever evinced a lively interest in the welfare of the Aborigines, and studied their dispositions and habits to the best of my ability, as opportunity presented, during the long period of twenty-four years.

The result is a well matured conviction, that at no very distant period, annihilation, (at least in the densely settled portions of the Colony) is their destiny.

I, with great pain admit, an utter inability to assist the Honorable the Committee of the Legislative Council, to carry out their benevolent intentions farther, than in again suggesting, that provision of medical aid, in case of need, should be secured in every possible instance – that a suit of clothing, adapted to the two sexes, should be annually distributed; and that the issue of a large warm blanket (much required during the present very cold season) to each of the Aboriginal adults, should take place at the earliest moment possible, and be repeated annually; an arrangement of the above description would, I feel assured, be gratefully appreciated, and tend, very materially, to mitigate those severe sufferings to which the Aborigines are now unhappily subjected.

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From the Reverend Edward Rogers, Minister of the Church of England, Gosford, 10<sup>th</sup> March 1846:-

1. The number of Aborigines, in this District, does not exceed fifty, of whom about two-thirds are males; there are about ten children.
2. Within the last five years their number has considerably decreased, as such, I think, as one-fourth.
3. Chiefly among the adults.
4. To immorality and drunkenness; by the almost constant intercourse of the females with the Europeans, they have contracted diseases of the most virulent nature, from which many of both sexes die. But still more of them, I think, die of consumption; on every possible occasion they drink to excess, and then lie exposed to the dew and night air; a cold is the general consequence, which, acting on a frame already sensibly affected by disease, not unfrequently terminates in a speedy death.
5. To us their condition appears to be most miserable; they are perfectly a wandering race, having no settled place of abode, and no houses or huts of any kind. In fine weather they sleep in the open air beside a fire, with a piece of tree-tea bark for a mat, a stone for their pillow, and with little or perhaps nothing to cover them. In rain, however, they usually stick up a few sheets of bark, and sometimes they use only a single sheet bent double, beneath which they take shelter; but this luxury, I believe, belongs principally to the men; the women, even in rain, sleep without any covering except a blanket. Their clothing consists wholly of cast off and tattered garments; but many of them have nothing more than a few tufts of skins around the body. They subsist chiefly on fish, and on whatever they can catch in the bush, both animals and reptiles.
6. With the exception of what they procure from the sea, their means of subsistence has certainly decreased, owing to the country being located, and the consequent destruction of the native or wild animals.
7. Blankets have been yearly given to the blacks since my arrival here in 1838, until the year before last, when they were withheld. At the time I much regretted their being taken from the old people; but I certainly approved of the others not having any. I had hoped that, being so long used to the comfort of a blanket, they would have exerted themselves, and by their own labour acquired the means to purchase them. This, however, has not been the case; they are naturally indisposed to work, and rather than do what they are so much averse to, they have gone without any proper winter clothing. During the time blankets were given them, they appeared much pleased and grateful, and I believe were ever ready to aid, in any possible manner, the Police, deeming it their duty to do so. I would then urgently recommend that blankets should be again allowed them; it in some degree at least binds them to good conduct, and adds I am sure considerably to their comfort. They have not, in this District, the means of making themselves cloaks from the skins of animals, and unless therefore the Government befriends them, they, and especially the old people, will feel the winter very severely.
8. I am not aware that the blacks have ever applied for either hospital or medical Treatment; on two occasions His Excellency the Governor kindly granted me a supply of medicine expressly for their use, which has been of great service.
9. None of them are regularly employed by the settlers, for they will not engage themselves. Occasionally, however, two or three of the younger ones have stopped a few weeks at a place and made themselves useful either as stock keepers or messengers; but they will not remain long away from their tribe; for any service they may render, they usually receive food and clothing.
10. None whatever; from earliest life they are given to wander, and will not remain in one place. To manual labor of any kind they have a great repugnance, very seldom will they even fish, except for their own immediate use.
11. There are I think four or five half-castes in the District; two of them are female adults and are married to Europeans; the others are children and are living with the Aborigines.
12. We have only one instance of a white living with an Aborigine; they have a family of five children.

13. The Aborigines are on the most friendly terms with us.
14. No property whatever has been wilfully destroyed by them for several years past.
15. They live very amicably together and have no hostile meetings.
16. There is no decrease in their number by reason of hostilities.
17. Infanticide is certainly known among them; but I think it is now seldom, if ever, practised. I am of opinion though that they frequently have recourse to abortion.
18. I hardly know what to suggest for the promotion of their welfare, as I feel persuaded they will not relinquish their present mode of living for one of a more settled character. I would, however, strongly recommend that blankets should again be distributed among them; and I should be glad were they also supplied with some strong but light garment to wear during the day; this I think really necessary, if only for society's sake. They should also be allowed medical attendance and proper food during illness. In no other way could we, I think, materially add to their comfort.

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From the Reverend Robert Thorley Bolton, Minister of the Church of England, Hexham, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1846:-

1. On this head it is impossible to give certain data, and to ascertain with correctness to which tribe the individual Aborigines belong, as long as they are at peace with each other. The tribe in the immediate neighbourhood of Hexham, I should designate, in compliance with their custom, as belonging to swamps; "Guacumba," "Tirto," &c., which are some of the native names of the places they frequent. They have a chief, but he is in certain respects subordinate to the chief of the Newcastle Tribe, of which they form a portion. They visit Maitland, but do not venture further west. They usually are on friendly terms with the Raymond Terrace, Port Stephens, Brisbane Water, and Newcastle blacks, with whom they have frequent intercourse, and trade by barter, forming a kind of "brotherhood." Those strictly belonging to the Swamp I should compute at about twenty; they have not above three or four women amongst them, and no young children. The other Aboriginal tribes in my District are the Elalong and Wollombi tribes, entirely distinct, and generally at variance with each other. The former is considered a warlike and powerful tribe, but I have no means of estimating their numbers. The Wollombi tribe I should compute at about forty; most of the men have wives – "gins;" the children under twelve amount to about one-third of this number.
2. As far as my observation extends, it has diminished; it is impossible to ascertain to what extent.
3. The adults die without an equal number of children supplying their place; but we never hear of the deaths of Aborigines, except peculiar circumstances attend them, or upon inquiry, after missing any of them for some time.
4. To the small proportionate number of women, few of whom have children.
5. They are, in most respects, savages. On the river, they partly support themselves by fishing; they also eat a particular kind of grub, opossums, guanas, and kangaroos. Where the land is cleared, the latter are, of course, much diminished in number; but the occasional supplies of food obtained from the white population, chiefly as a return for labour, in a manner compensates for this loss. Their labour is, however, little valued, except after rain, when they are useful in stripping bark, or in the winter in cutting wood.
6. I should say not; for they have more opportunities of rendering their labour acceptable, since the fear of them, and the prejudice against them are diminishing.
7. Yes, they have at the adjoining Police Offices, I cannot say for what period. The effect of it was most beneficial in a charitable, social, and moral point of view. They regarded them as one of their greatest comforts – they accepted them as a boon, and the use they made of them has taught many the first lessons of modesty, and the use of clothes. It ceased in May, 1845, to the best of my recollection. I consider the cessation has lessened their friendly dispositions towards us, and is looked upon by them as an act of meanness. To resume the distribution would be most advisable, and save the lives of many individuals. It would also assist in forming a more correct estimate of their number, and in retaining some hold over them.
8. I am not aware that they have been refused hospital or medical assistance when applied for; but for want of knowing where to apply, they have frequently suffered from the want of it. I have myself given them medicine, and found them grateful for it, but have not been able to induce them to apply for it to any medical practitioner, or at the dispensary. They would, however, of themselves apply to any one whom they once looked upon as their friend, and who had gained

their confidence. I think the care of their sick would be the most effectual means of conciliating with them. An aged blackfellow, belonging to the Swamps, had been received into the Maitland Hospital, where he died of a severe and old age; he was quite superannuated.

9. Perhaps one in twenty, regularly; most of them occasionally; they strip bark, and cut wood; they sometimes reap, and husk maize; they are employed as stockmen, and they are useful in going errands. For their labour, they seldom have more than broken victuals, flour, sugar, tea, and tobacco; sometimes they have old clothes given them, but seldom new slop shirts or other clothing. The relation between labour and profit is, in a few instances, sufficiently defined, and in due proportion, being regarded rather in the light of a free gift, than the wages of labour. In very few instances are they paid in money; they know the value of it, and prefer receiving it to any kind of payment. In some instances they make a good use of it, but generally they spend it (particularly small sums) in drink.

10. They are active, clever, and capable of exertion, but not continued exertion. They are lazy when their immediate wants are supplied, having no adequate inducement for labour.

11. There are several; I cannot state their numbers; they all live after the manner of the Aborigines. Many, who I believe are not so, pretend to be half-castes, and seem proud of it.

12. No.

13. Friendly.

14. None of property.

15. They seem to be very peaceable; though occasionally we hear of ancient existing enmities leading to collision between hostile tribes. The Wollombi blacks, I am told, are frequently at war with the Bulga and Elalong blacks; their allies being the Port Stephens, Newcastle, and Brisbane Water blacks, &c., all too distant to afford them sufficient support, and the tribe is therefore considerably reduced.

16. The foregoing cause has affected directly the numbers of that tribe, as to its decrease; and its increase indirectly more care having been taken in rearing their children.

17. We have reason to suspect it. But I think miscarriages, either proceeding from some natural causes, as want of food, disease, and frequent over-exertion, or abortion, are more frequently the causes of this failure of issue. My reason for suspecting infanticide, at least of girls, is, that boys, who add to the strength of a tribe, are to be met with in greater numbers than girls, who add to its weakness, by rendering them objects of attack. For the women do not marry in their tribes, and are fought for. Another reason why I suspect it is, that I have also observed the greatest number of children in the weakest tribes.

18. They might be employed in clearing and fencing land for Her Majesty's Government, by task-work. Such lands being of good quality, might be sold in small lots at an advanced minimum price, for agricultural purposes, to cover the expense of it. The children being provided for and clothed in infant schools, whilst the parents are so employed. But they must have power to leave and to come, "*walk*," whenever they like, or they will become suspicious. They might also be entitled to the protection of a civil marriage law, where they are not Christians, or where only one of them, after cohabiting as husband or wife, had embraced Christianity, upon the principles laid down in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. This would remove a great obstacle to their embracing Christianity. There is, in my opinion, no inherent deficiency of intellect, which renders them incapable of comprehending the doctrines of Christianity, but every difficulty in the circumstances in which they are placed, to arrest their attention to them, or in bringing them under their wholesome influence. All the children which to my knowledge have received instruction, and frequented places of worship, have been rather intelligent, well behaved, and attentive, during divine service.

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From the Reverend John Jennings Smith, M. A., Minister of the Church of England, Paterson, 6<sup>th</sup> April 1846:-

1. Twenty to thirty, of whom perhaps seven or eight are children; more males than females.
2. The number has diminished very considerably in seven years.
3. Chiefly adults, and of consequence children.

4. Some may have absconded, but the chief cause of decrease is excess and dissipation.
5. Their condition is wretched, their subsistence precarious.
6. Ordinary means of subsistence decrease as civilization and cultivation increase.
7. Blankets were formerly issued for several years. The effect was a partial good when not sold to obtain drink; they have not been distributed for the last two years. The few Aborigines in this district could and would be clothed if they would use the clothing; blankets are therefore like clothing scarcely necessary, from an unwillingness to wear them.
8. I am not aware of any want of attention, when required.
9. Very few are employed, scarcely one-sixth, and then, for the occasional performance of the lowest domestic offices, remunerated by food.
10. Habits of indolence and unsteadiness render their services of little value, and not to be depended on.
11. Half-castes are chiefly children, living with and in the habits of the Aborigines.
12. I knew of two instances of white men cohabiting with aboriginal women and living always together; in one case they had children, but generally the aversion appears to be reciprocal.
13. The Aborigines are all friendly with the settlers. Collision between the races is extremely rare ; loss of life has only occurred in cases of premeditated murder.
14. No destruction of property has been occasioned by the Aborigines.
15. Occasional encounters between the tribes of this and other districts ; the results are generally concealed. After a late encounter a woman was missing, reported to have been murdered by the other tribe.
16. Answer No. 15 applies to this question.
17. Infanticide is reported to be common, but not certainly known but amongst the tribe or tribes.
18. The Aborigines retire or decrease where civilization advances, so that they furnish only a few facts of their capabilities. I at this time know one instance of successful cultivation in this district, and one in another district ; when the boys have attained information they are useful and good servants ; I also know of a man and woman who are very good servants, clothed, and susceptible of teaching.

From these examples and others I hear of, I am of opinion that if children born of Aborigines were taken from their parents before bush habits were contracted, and were kept from the contamination of servants, and their natural connexions, i.e., if abstracted from such associations at the age of three years, I think they would be found susceptible of good and useful impressions ; would become good servants, and receive christian instruction with advantage.

I am also of opinion that, wherever such attempts are made to improve their condition, the persons employed in such undertaking, should not be permitted to follow any other pursuit.

Such a measure would be calculated to form fixed habits, and entirely remodel the character of the rising generation, after which, the work of moral reformation would become comparatively easy ; when old enough the girls could work at the needle, make straw hats, &c., the boys as tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, and any other kind of employment calculated to bring the powers of the mind into exercise, more than farm labour ; at the same time, let the children have mutual instruction upon the plan of the late Duchess of Bridgewater, under whom the same instructors attended the poor children in all their avocations.

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From the Reverend Charles Woodward, B.C.L., Minister of the Church of England, Port Macquarie, 31<sup>st</sup> March 1846:-

1. 210 males, 80 women, and 80 children.
2. Diminished three-fourths.
3. Chiefly adults.
4. From intemperance, and want of food in some degree at least.
5. Wandering and living upon natural resources; occasionally bread, &c.
6. Diminished in consequence of the scarcity of their kangaroos, &c.
7. They have ceased, and the resumption is very desirable.
8. Allowed.
9. Only occasionally employed, as they will not remain fixed for any time; food and raiment given to them.
10. None except for riding.
11. Some 20 or more living with them.
12. No.
13. Quite friendly.
14. I do not hear of any.
15. Seem to be peaceable.

16. No.
17. It does not seem to be known.
18. All Missionary efforts are generally commenced by school training, both of adults and children, but the Aborigines of New South Wales differing so much from other countries, little if anything can be expected of the adults in this particular. They should however be treated with friendly intercourse as a step to civilization; and it appears to me most important that the half-castes and infant Aborigines should be withdrawn into local Asylums and trained up for future usefulness. And it is supposed that they would give them up.

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From the Reverend James Yelverton Wilson, Minister of the Church of England, Belfast, Portland Bay, 6<sup>th</sup> April 1846.

1. It is impossible to reply with any precision to this query, but my persuasion, from some years of observation is, that at this time there are not more than three hundred in the whole district; males and females perhaps nearly equal in number; children few, beyond all proportion.
2. Their number has unquestionably decreased materially within the last five years.
3. Necessarily both (See reply to No 4 infra.)
4. Partly from the muskets of settlers, partly by infanticide, but mainly from the ravages of syphilis, unmitigated by medical treatment, impairing the procreative powers; in some instances annihilating them, and in others, where conception takes place, so disfiguring the foetus, as to render it (worse than an abortion) a lingering spectacle of human distortion, irrecoverably pledged to speedy dissolution. The prevalence of the above mentioned disease is, I am persuaded, far greater than superficial observers are aware.
5. Their habits are those of the unameliorated savage, with the addition of mendicancy, where it is likely to obtain for them European articles of food and clothing.
6. I do not consider their ordinary means of subsistence in this district to have become at all diminished. They have still abundance of kangaroo, up to within five miles of town, or even less; the whole circle of the bay, the sea coast, and the rivers abounding in fish; and in addition to these resources, the tribes which frequent the town, luxuriate on the blubber of the whale in the winter season, and during the whole year obtain food, in return for firewood supplied to the humbler classes.
7. Blankets have not been distributed in this district within the last three years, except at the Mount Rouse Protectorate Establishment; previously to that period, they were issued at Portland. There was no perceptible effect, as far as I can learn, either from issuing or cessation. To resume the distribution to wandering savages would be, I think, a useless expenditure, unproductive of any further good, than the temporary covering of a being who would barter it away for the first bauble that met his eye.
8. Except at the Mount Rouse Protectorate Establishment, medical treatment has not been offered for Aborigines in this district.
9. A very inappreciable number (perhaps not twenty in the whole district) are employed as shepherds, trackers of cattle, and bullock drivers; and I believe are invariably remunerated by rations and clothing.
10. I know of no habits pertaining to the Aborigines here, adapting them for employment, beyond that of stockmen or bullock drivers, the former of which delights them much when once they are taught to ride on horseback; I presume they become enamoured of cattle hunting, from it being a sort of (to them) comprehensible refinement on their native habits, of tracing the footsteps of other animals. They will not try one bit of mechanism beyond cutting firewood; they always appear to me to be struck with a sort of hopelessness of attaining anything that would bear comparison with European handiwork, and yield at once.
11. There are a considerable number of half-castes, all living with the Aborigines.
12. There is no such disposition, but from my acquaintance with medical men, and practice, and from other sources of information, I conclude unhesitatingly that promiscuous sexual commerce between the Aboriginal females and European shepherds, bullock drivers &c., in this district, exists to an almost incredible amount.
13. Generally hostile, the aggression commencing in Aboriginal depredation; it is impossible to list the loss of life from collisions, and it would be unwise to state my own impressions, which must, necessarily, be to a considerable extent vague. It has, doubtless, been the result of powder and shot.

14. I cannot say; the Commissioners of Crown Lands might ascertain with something approaching correctness, by instituting a temperate and well-directed enquiry.
15. The tribes of this district are, like those of most others, friendly on the whole, but have battles with each other occasionally.
16. I do not consider their numbers to be much affected by their hostilities, which are rarely productive of anything beyond wounds not mortal.
17. Infanticide is decidedly practised in this district, and in many authenticated instances the victim is devoured by the male parent; an instance has just been related to me by a medical gentleman, that on the death of the miserably diseased Aborigine, the flesh was stripped off the thighs, hands and feet, and the heart taken out and devoured by a notorious black called, "Sou"wester", who was so ill in consequence as to require medical aid, which the said medical gentleman, although much disgusted, humanely afforded.  
Another revolting case was told me by a Portland Bay settler, as follows; an Aboriginal child fell on its elbow into the fire, and mortification ensuing, the hand suppurated away a little above the wrist and dropped off; the detached and diseased fragment was quickly devoured.
18. I do not know of any "facts" the communication of which would be likely to be of any service to the Committee; I cannot think of any plan for their civilization, *but the unnatural, arbitrary, and at present illegal one*, of forcible abduction of the infant portion of them, for the purposes of compulsory education in common with white children; the only real hardship attending such a course (if rendered legal) would be the invasion of *parental feelings*, which I apprehend to be amongst *cannibals* not very intense; the compulsory education of children would be to them an ordeal scarcely more severe than the ordinary discipline of our own children, during their years of pupillage. The present Protectorate I think inefficient.

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From the Reverend William West Simpson, Minister of the Church of England, Lower Hawkesbury, 31<sup>st</sup> March 1846.

1. 16 males, 7 females, 4 children; total 27.
2. The number has diminished very materially; but I cannot ascertain to what extent.
3. The decrease has been among children and adults indiscriminately.
4. The cause may be found in the extreme penury and helplessness of the Aborigines, who rely upon the support of the settlers, and less dependent upon their own exertions; upon increased wants, and diminished means of supplying them.
5. A state of wandering beggary, with a little hunting and fishing, and the contributions at the several farm houses.
6. The occupation of the land by the settlers has diminished their independent means of subsistence, whilst it has tended to procure them occasional and precarious help from charity.
7. Blankets have been distributed to them heretofore. Since Mr. North (the Police Magistrate) left Windsor, this has been discontinued. The effect is various; with some it was the habit to sell the blanket to procure tobacco and rum; to others, the withdrawing of the blanket has been followed by cold, complaints of the chest and death. The blacks themselves ascribe the mortality among them to this cause, saying "cough kill them all." I should recommend that the distribution be resumed, but that it should not be necessary for them to go to Windsor to receive them.
8. I cannot learn that they ever applied for Hospital relief; they appear reluctant to go to the Hospital and the belief among them is that they would be called upon to pay private practitioners. They have made applications at this parsonage for medicine and assistance in the case of sickness.
9. Two of the blacks named Bill Falconer, and Bill Ferris, are trusted to break-in horses, in which they are tolerably successful. Another named Captain, has occasional employment with Mr. Grono, at Cattai, and also one named Neddy, with Mr Doyle, on the Hawkesbury. Bill Ferris is cultivating about three acres of land for himself, under Mr John Bailey, at the MacDonald. With these exceptions, there is no dependence upon their continuous labour. When employed, their remuneration consists of food, clothing and wages. Besides these, Ballandilla, a black girl found by Sir Thomas Mitchell, is living in the service of Mr Clink, Milkmaid Reach.
10. Not any whatever.
11. In Marramarra Creek I have found a family of half-castes, the children of John Lewis, or Ferdinand, a white man employed in the lime trade with Windsor. The mother of these children is Bidy, the sister of the black fellow Bowen, of Pitt Water, and the daughter of an aboriginal woman by an English seaman. There are

seven children of this connexion, from nineteen to two years of age, living in their father's house after the manner of the settlers in the Creek. The two lads are employed in the lime boat with their father, four of the younger children are yet at home, and the eldest girl is living with a man of the name of Rose, a fisherman at Marramarra Creek. I cannot hear of any white woman living with an aboriginal man.

12. The only instance of the kind that I know of, has been stated in No.11.
  13. Quite friendly. There is no house in the district where they are refused such assistance as the people can afford them.
  14. None whatever; neither do they purloin anything, although lying within their reach.
  15. Perfectly peaceable.
  16. In no way.
  17. I cannot ascertain that infanticide is known amongst them.
  18. I think they should have their blankets, and I would recommend the distribution of a good Guernsey shirt, with a stout pair of woollen trousers, or a warm petticoat, at the commencement of winter; but to draw them to Windsor to receive them, is the readiest means to cause them to barter them away.
- It would be desirable to set an indelible brand upon every article, and to punish persons illegally in possession of them. It would give me great pleasure to distribute the bounty of the Committee, at this Parsonage.

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From the Reverend John Couch Grylls, M.A., Minister of the Church of England, Parish of the Holy Trinity, Sydney, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1846:-

Sir, I beg leave to acquaint you, in reply to your Circular requesting me to report upon the condition of the Aborigines, &c., for the information of the Legislative Council, that there are none residing within my area of charge.

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From the Reverend Benjamin Lucas Watson, M.A., Minister of the Church of England, Penrith, March 31<sup>st</sup> 1846:-

Sir, In reply to your Circular of the 17<sup>th</sup> of February, respecting the condition of the Aborigines, I have the honour to state, that there are no Aborigines resident in my parish; and also, that since my arrival in the Colony, I have never had any opportunity of becoming acquainted with their habits or condition.

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From the Reverend William Stone, B.A., Minister of the Church of England, Sutton Forrest, 6<sup>th</sup> April 1846:-

1. I am not aware of what is the probable number of Aborigines in this District.
2. I cannot say whether the number has increased or diminished, within the last five years, not having been resident in this district so long.
3. I cannot answer for the same reason.
4. No answer for the likely reason.
5. Their condition is truly miserable. They frequently apply to me for food and clothing; neither of which I am enabled to supply, in any degree proportioned to their actual wants.
6. Their ordinary means of subsistence has certainly not increased, however it may have diminished.
7. I am informed blankets were issued to the Aborigines, some few years since; I think it would be highly desirable to renew the practice, and especially now the winter about to commence.
8. This I cannot answer.
9. I have known them to be occasionally employed during the reaping season. They complain much of inadequate remuneration.
10. Being so extremely migratory in their habits they cannot be much employed, at least permanently.
11. I have not observed many half-castes in this district; such as I have, however, lived with, and after the manner of the Aborigines.
12. None whatever.
13. They are on friendly terms with the settlers.
14. They have not destroyed any property in the district.
15. They appear friendly towards each other.
16. I cannot say what their numbers were, or are at present.
17. I have never heard of infanticide being committed by them; on the contrary they seem much attached to their offspring.

18. From their incessant application for clothes, I am inclined to believe, that the committee could at present confer no benefit greater, than a speedy distribution of the same.

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From the Reverend John Gregor, M.A., Minister of the Church of England, Brisbane, Moreton Bay, 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1846:-

1. My knowledge of the number of Aborigines in these districts is very imperfect, as no public Census of them has been taken, and as I have no means of ascertaining, in my private or official capacity, their exact number; they may, probably, amount to two thousand, as there are about thirty-two or thirty-three tribes, averaging about sixty souls; as to the proportion of males, females and children amongst them I shall not even hazard a conjecture; it has always appeared to me, that the males outnumber the females; this disproportion may be accounted for, from the bad treatment which the females receive, and from the little value which is set on their lives by the males.
2. My knowledge of the decrease in their numbers is confined to the space of three years; within this period, the diminution may be fairly estimated at one sixth of the whole number; while their natural increase has been greatly checked by their licentious intercourse with Europeans.
3. The decrease has been principally among adults.
4. To their hostile collisions with Europeans – to the licentious intercourse of their females with Europeans – to their natural wars – and to natural diseases.
5. If the first part of this question be understood generally, without a particular reference to the last part of it, the answer to it is, that their actual condition is one of blind heathenism and ferocious barbarism. If it be understood with reference to the last number of the query, the answer to it is, that their condition is one of *plenty*. It is a great mistake to suppose the Aborigines of these districts have not abundance in food. Throughout the whole year the supply is plentiful, and two hours exertion generally secures them enough to satisfy their wants for twenty four; such, from my own observation, and from the representations of others, I believe to be their general condition, as to the provisions of the sustenance of their bodies. These provisions consists of fruits – such as the fig, the chestnut, the bunga bunga, &c.; of roots – such as the tam, the fornroot, &c.; of various animals – as the kangaroo, the bear, &c.; of birds – as the emu, the turkey, the pigeon, the duck, &c; of grubs - as the cobbera , &c; of many kinds of fish – as the cod, the mullet, the sea-lug, the turtle, crabs, mussels, &c., of wild honey; and of beef, mutton, and bread; they eat, I must also add, human flesh; for beyond all doubt, they are gross cannibals.
6. In such parts as are located by Europeans, some diminution has been caused by their presence, in the subsistence which the Aborigines derive from such animals as food on the plains and open forest land, and from the fish which exist in the ponds of the interior. But with the exception of fish, from the use of which they are most wholly excluded, the diminution of their food arising from the location of these districts by Europeans, is *not yet* so great as sometimes supposed, as the animals that subsisted on the plains and open forest land, supplying the aborigines with articles of food, have rather been driven from them into remote corners, where they still live and multiply, then destroyed directly or indirectly by Europeans; at all events, whatever decrease has thus been effected is nearly compensated by the food which they now receive from Europeans, at the stations and in the towns.
7. Blankets were formerly issued to them in considerable numbers; but latterly the issue has been greatly limited, if not altogether discontinued. I do not approve of the issue of blankets to them, because it encourages laziness and sloth, and creates filth and disease. If anything in the shape of covering, in this warm climate, is to be given to them as a present, it should be a piece of cotton cloth, made up in such a way as to be of no use to Europeans. To give them food and clothing, however, except as a remuneration for services performed, appears very questionable policy, inasmuch, as thereby they are confirmed in the idea, that all the necessities of life should be furnished them freely by the bounty of nature of man, and in the *love* of their own indolent habits, while they are led to regard the labour and industry of civilized life with derision and contempt.
8. A very few have applied for, or been recommended to hospital or medical treatment; they are not admitted into hospital; such as have received medical treatment, have received it as outdoor patients. The expense appears to be divided between the Colonial Government, and the Colonial Surgeon.
9. Few of the Aborigines of these Districts are employed, even occasionally, by Europeans. When employed in the towns, they either cut a little wood, or draw a few buckets of water at one time. When employed in the country, they do the same, occasionally stripping a few sheets of bark besides, for roofing huts. As a remuneration they receive beef, mutton, flour, tobacco, and sometimes shirts.
10. As in their native state in the interior, their pursuits are those of chase and war; their habits are much opposed to the peaceful and useful occupation of civilized life. It is difficult so to change them, that they will for any length of time continue even in those occupations which have some congeniality with their native habits. It is next to impossible so to bend them that they will apply with the steady perseverance of civilized people to the less exciting and erratic employments of common life. Such of them, however, as live on the sea coast, and on the islands in

the various bays, from their habits of familiarity with the ocean, and with the various sorts of fish near the shore, might, with some trouble, be converted into useful fishermen, living in hamlets along the coast.

11. There are very few half castes in these districts. Those who are in them are living principally after the manner of Europeans, though there are a few living with the Aborigines. The reason that there are so few half castes in these districts is, that they are nearly all murdered by the Aboriginal parents, or by the males of the tribes to which they belong. All the males are murdered invariably in the act of parturition, or immediately after, unless Europeans happen to witness the births. The female half castes sometimes experience a less severe fate, from an idea prevalent among the Aborigines that they will not be so dangerous when they come to years of maturity, as the male children would be, if they were allowed to live.
12. There is little disposition on the part of the neighbouring European population to amalgamate with the Aboriginal inhabitants so as to form families. I have only heard of one case of this nature, at the remotest station on the Condamine River. At the same time, there is but too strong, and too prevalent a disposition on the part of the male European population to have illicit connexion with the Aboriginal females. This abominable intercourse is common and open to a disgusting extent; and its effects, in a religious and moral point of view, are most pernicious, to say nothing of the physical evils of which it is often productive.
13. The relations between the Aboriginal and European races, ever since these Districts were opened for settlement by Europeans, have generally been hostile. There is at present more friendliness between the races than ever has been before this season. But I do not expect that this state of friendly peace will be of long duration. As soon as the Aborigines consider themselves, from the state of the country, in a position to carry off and destroy cattle and sheep with impunity, they will recommence the depredations on the property of Europeans. When the settlers find their property carried away and destroyed by these barbarians, they will unite for the punishment of the depredators, who, losing some of their number in hostile collisions, will, from their love of revenge, retaliate on Europeans, killing without distinction everyone who falls into their power. In this manner, repeated collisions, originating almost always in the aggression of the savage barbarians on the property of the civilized inhabitants, have happened in the course of the last four years between the Aborigines and the Europeans, and some of them have been of a very serious and fatal character, particularly in reference to the former. Indeed, during two years of my residence here, the collisions of aggression, defence, and retaliation were incessant. In such a hostile and disturbed state of affairs, the loss of life on both sides has been very great. Not fewer than fifty Europeans have been murdered by the Aborigines since the District was opened; and I should suppose that, at the lowest calculation, not fewer than three hundred Aborigines have lost their lives by the hands of Europeans. The Aborigines have generally murdered the Europeans singly by cunning and stratagem, mangling the body after death in the most brutal and shocking manner. The Europeans have destroyed the Aborigines generally in expeditions undertaken for the purpose of punishing them for their depredations, the Government being unable or unwilling to chastise them for their breaches of the laws of civilized men. Europeans have killed some of the Aborigines in self-defence, when they were attacked by them.
14. Very great destruction of property has been caused by them. There are few stations in these districts which have not suffered more or less from their depredations. One squatter, Mr Balfour, has lost as many, I believe, as two thousand sheep by them. Mr McKenzie has also been severe sufferer in the loss of both sheep and cattle. On the Darling Downs, where the country is more open on the eastern side of the main range, the loss has not been so great, though there Messrs. Sibly and King, within my recollection, had four hundred sheep destroyed by them at one time.
15. Almost every tribe is more or less at variance with its neighbour; hostility, however, is greater and more apparent between sets of tribes than between single ones. Thus all the tribes inhabiting the mountainous districts from Brisbane to the Bunga mountains, are at deadly feud with the sea coast tribes, from the mouth of the Pine River, to the mouth of the Wide River Bay. Their wars are, therefore, constant appear interminable. Hostility exists not only among the males, but also among the females, who are perfect amazons, fighting with the most bitter fierceness, and killing one another with remorseless cruelty.
16. Their numbers are both directly and indirectly affected by their hostilities to a considerable extent, as a battle is seldom terminated without loss of life on the one side or the other.
17. Even purely Aboriginal children are occasionally destroyed by the mothers when the births have not been witnessed by any of the males of the tribe to which the females belong; such instances of infanticide are however, I believe rare, but half caste infants are nearly all destroyed; the males are invariably murdered, unless they be taken in charge by Europeans instantly after birth; such being the case, illicit connexion with the Aboriginal females by Europeans, is a crime of the deepest die.
18. The melioration of the condition of the Aborigines is intimately connected with their civilization, and their conversion to the Christian religion. Indeed the permanent welfare of the race can rest on no other foundation than their reception of Christianity, and of the arts, the science, the laws and usages of civilized men; entertaining this opinion, without entailing or even alluding to any merely secular scheme, for the partial improvement of their

condition, I beg to submit, as a reply to this query, a letter I did myself the honour to address to the Lord Bishop of Australia, in the year 1843, in which suggested is the establishment of a mission to the Aborigines on Fraser's Island, near the mouth of the Wide Bay River, for introducing among these islanders the arts and customs of civilized life, and the knowledge and practice of the Christian religion, who being civilized and converted to Christianity, would prove the best agents for diffusing the blessings of true religion and civilization among the various tribes of the Aboriginal inhabitants of the interior of this Country.

*Brisbane*

*April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1843*

“MY LORD

My position as Minister of this distant parish is favourable for making observations on the Aboriginal population; and ever since my arrival here, my attention has more or less directed to the Aborigines, with the view of ascertaining their condition and character, the practicability of converting them to Christianity, and spreading among them the blessings of civilization, and the means of accomplishing this most important work of religious and civil improvement.

The opinion generally prevalent among the resident European population, regarding these untutored savages, that they are essentially an inferior race of beings by the decree of the Creator – the avowed sentiments of the majority of those Missionaries who have already been employed among them regarding their utter incapacity “to discern spiritual things” – and the total failure of almost every enterprise that has hitherto been undertaken to ameliorate their barbarous state, by imparting to them a knowledge of the Christian religion and the advantages of European civilization – serve to discountenance and discourage any further endeavours to introduce among them our religion, our arts, and our sciences, to the end that they become a civilized and Christian people, spending this life in fear of God and the practice of charity, in the sure and certain hope of a future and eternal world.

But however unpromising a field, from these appearances, the wild and uncultivated Aborigines may be regarded as affording for the efforts of the Christian Missionary, still there seems – from observations of the character of these wandering inhabitants of the forest, and upon reflection on the causes which have led to the general failure of aboriginal missions in this country, arising partly from the internal organization of these missions, and partly from the untoward circumstances in which it has been proposed to conduct them – to exist grounds for believing that the elevation of this race, from the lowest barbarism to the practices of civilized life, and from the worst paganism or rather atheism, to the knowledge of one living and true God and his son Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of sinful men, is not an impossible nor a hopeless undertaking, if it be formed on an enlightened and well devised plan, with adequate means, and under favourable internal circumstances.

The accidental grounds on which this conviction partly rests being at present omitted, it may suffice to advance, as the main essential foundation on which it stands, the conclusion rationally formed by induction from a number of facts collected from personal observation, and from the oral and written testimony of others, who from curiosity or Christian philanthropy have inquired into the nature and character of the Aborigines, that they are real and true specimens of the human race; that their physical and spiritual constitutions are as perfect as ours are naturally; that they are not deficient essentially as to the possession of a single bodily organ or mental faculty; that they have a will, and are free and voluntary agents; that they learn reason and judgement, and exercise them in drawing conclusions and in forming and executing designs; that they can *discern moral distinctions, and do know good from evil*; that they have, and exercise, all the better affections of love, kindness, tenderness and gratitude; that they are led by the same crimes as we are, that they yield to the impulses of the same appetites, and that they are but too subject to the same evil passions of anger, hatred and revenge; while they have that consciousness or internal sense of a derived existence constantly dependent on something foreign to themselves, of which no created rational being can altogether free himself, and which lies at the very bottom of religion; have a belief and conception of mind or spirit as separate and distinct from the body; and have an obscure and indefinite ill-defined sort of an impression that this ethereal portion of their being as men, of which their idea is that it resembles their shadow, is not annihilated at death, but soars aloft into the sky beyond the distant mountains. To thus be assured that the Aborigines are not removed, by an original and inherent inferiority of nature, from the species to which we belong, and are not consequently as the brutes that perish, but that, barbarous and uncultivated as they are, they nevertheless form an integral portion of the great family of the human kind, and that they have implanted in their being those intellectual and moral stamina, which manifest their spiritual alliance, not only with the rest of the children of men, but with the universal Creator who at first made man in his own likeness and after his own image, and indicate, however faintly, the existence of another world where their souls may in common with ours, find a permanent and eternal home, is to rationally persuaded that these

children of the forest furnish materials, however corrupted, rude, unpolished and stubborn, for the operation of Christian Missionaries, which shall ultimately so yield to their patient exertions, animated by pure benevolence and directed by a *sound mind*, as that by the blessing of God, they shall be fashioned or grow to the full stature of perfect men in Jesus Christ..

A real and not imaginary foundation of success in an enterprise aiming to Christianize these heathen, thus plainly lying in the substance on which the Missionaries would have in the exercise of their ministry and teaching, to bestow their assiduous labours, it seems that, with the application of adequate pecuniary means, nothing more is required to ensure finally the desired success, than a favourable external sense of operation for the learning, zeal, judgement, charity and patience of Missionary instructors to display themselves, in the execution of a wisely devised and canonically superintended scheme of evangelization.

That I do not possess such superior invention and wisdom, as are adequate to the discovery of the fittest external scene of operation for a mission to the Aborigines, and to the laying down of the best plan for impressing them with the truths of the gospel, none will be more ready to affirm, than I myself to admit, on the evidence of consciousness; and it would cause me pain and lasting regret, were it for a moment to be supposed, that in venturing to recommend a field for the profitable employment of missionary labour, and to sketch a design for its judicious cultivation, I lay any claim whatever to original ingenuity and superior wisdom, or am actuated by any ambitious views or motives. It will be more a correct and just view to take of my motives and intentions, in adventuring on the following proposal, to consider it as the natural and unavoidable result: - first, of the circumstances in which I am placed in the midst of a numerous Aboriginal population, and in the neighbourhood of a mission which, not have having been attended with expected success, is on the point of undergoing a change, or of being entirely discontinued; and secondly, of a sincere desire to fulfil, in this manner, the great law of charity, which enjoins on us to do good to all men, and especially to our neighbours, and to obey the last command of the Saviour, to go and teach all nations, so far as to leave me the testimony of a good conscience, in the possession of present peace of mind, with some confidence against great day of accounts, that I shall not have to answer for the neglect of opportunities to consult and advance the temporal and external interests of my fellow creatures, and to increase the extent and glory of the Redeemer's Kingdom.

There is an island called Fraser's Island, and in some maps, marked as great Sandy Island, lying at the mouth of the Wide Bay River, about eighty miles to the northward of this town, which I would propose to occupy, as the scene of an Aboriginal mission, under the auspices and control of the Church of England. This island, according to various sources of information, is about sixty miles in length, and thirty in breadth, is well watered, and contains an Aboriginal resident population, amounting from one thousand five hundred to two thousand souls, who are supported by the natural production of their native island, and by the fish which they catch on its shores. Here, the population is more dense and more concentrated than it is on the continent, while there does exist in it the same inveteracy of wandering and roving habits, as there does among their continental neighbours.

This concentration of the inhabitants, and this permanency of their abodes within a limited locality, appear to render this island so much more favourable as a scene of missionary labour, than any spot, in the interior of New Holland, that, if we may judge from the conversion of other islands somewhat similarly situated from heathenism to Christianity, there can be little doubt entertained, that true ultimate success would crown the judicious and patient efforts of a plan, formed and connected on a sufficiently large scale, and supported by adequate pecuniary means.

To ensure this success on this island, thus favourable situated as to the density and permanency of its population, there should be at least two, and if possible, four Missionary stations established on it, and disposed, after examination, in the most convenient positions for mutual communication, and for securing the command of the whole island; in this manner the whole of the Missionaries could act in concert and simultaneously, and the whole island would be opened up to the influence of the example and teaching. Nor is it merely religious knowledge, which, by each of these Missionary establishments, should be attempted to be communicated to the Aborigines, but also with each of them it should be an object to convey the elements of secular knowledge, as I think it will almost always be found that an acquaintance with the arts and science of our civilized nations acts as predisposing cause on the mind of the heathens, if not to the real and cordial reception, at least to the valuation, consideration, and outward profession of Christianity.

Regard being thus had to the religious and civil improvement of the Aborigines, it would be advisable that there should be at each Missionary station, a regularly ordained Clergyman who would devote a considerable portion of his time to teaching all, but especially the young, and a schoolmaster to assist the Clergyman, together with a number of intelligent and religiously disposed mechanics, whose principal business it would be to instruct the natives in such useful mechanical arts as might be advantageously practised on the island. The ordained Clergyman at the head or chief Missionary station, should hold a superior rank, as that of an Archdeacon, invested with a regulating and governing power over each and all of the Missionary establishments but accountable at the same time, according to the Canons of the Church, for his management

in all respects, to the Bishop of the Diocese of Australia. If to this statement now be added, that at first a small body of police or soldiers would be requisite, to act in protection and defence of the Missionaries, in case they should be attacked by the Aborigines, who are represented to very fierce and savage, until such time as they should be assured of the benevolent and friendly intentions of their white visitors, who had not come to seize their land, exhaust the sources of their name. There is before your Lordship, an outline of the plan for introducing the Gospel and civilization among the Aboriginal population, which, if adopted and carried out into practical operation, would, it appears probable, issue in success, and not in disappointment, as most other schemes having the same object in view, have hitherto done. And it does not seem necessary at present to enter into more detail, as this can be easily done at a future time, if what has already been suggested meet with your Lordship's favourable consideration.

In hopes that at no distant period this plan may be favourable entertained, seriously adopted, and by the divine blessing made successful, my mind has pictured this little island on which it is proposed to plant a mission, as being viewed by future generations, if not by the present, as a second "Jona," whence, through means of its inhabitants, converted from Paganism to Christianity, and from barbarism to civilization, under the star of the British Church, the light of pure religion and true civilization was diffused to be the most benighted, savage, and remote tribes that inhabit the borders of the inhospitable deserts in the interior of Australia."

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most obedient humble servant

JOHN GREGOR

"The Right Reverend

Lord Bishop of Australia."

By a report, published by the "Society for the propagation of the Gospel in Foreign parts," in 1845, I find that a mission, somewhat similar to the one above recommended, has been established on Manatoulin Island, for the diffusion of the blessings of the Gospel and of civilization among the American Indians on the northern shores of Lake Huon, countenanced and supported by the Canadian Government, so that it is designated the Government Indian mission. It has been attended with a considerable measure of success; and if the Canadian Government continue to extend its protection and aid to it, there is reason to hope that, under God, it will be the means of accomplishing the pious and benevolent objects for which it was designed and undertaken. The success of this mission, the similarity between my proposal and the plan on which it is conducted, and the countenance and support which the Canadian Government gave it, ought to recommend the scheme of a mission to the Aborigines on Fraser's island to the attention, the favour, and the support of our Colonial Government..

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From the Reverend James Walker, M.A., Minister of the Church of England, Marsfield, North Parramatta, 27 February, 1846:-

Sir, In reference to the Circular of queries herewith returned, I have the honor to state that there are no Aborigines in my District.

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From the Reverend Francis Cameron, M.A., Minister of the Church of England, Singleton, April 13, 1846:-

1. The probable number of Aborigines in this District may be about seventy, viz. :- Males, adults 45, children 8; Females, adults 15, children 2.
2. I have not been five years in the District; but I have been given to understand, that within that period the number has considerably diminished.

3. The decrease has been principally among the adults. The increase from births has been very small.
4. The paucity of births may be attributable to the intercourse of their women with white men.
5. Their means of subsistence are by no means scanty; they all seem in very good condition, and many of the settlers are very kind to them.
6. Some of their ordinary means of subsistence have indeed diminished greatly in this neighbourhood. The kangaroos &c., having fled before the white men, their flocks and herds.
7. There was a partial issue of blankets to them in this District until May, 1844, when it entirely ceased. That the distribution of blankets be again resumed, is in my opinion, most advisable for the Aborigines seem to me to very subject to pulmonary affections; their sufferings in winter are therefore very severe; but it ought to be a *general*, not a *partial* distribution. The latter used to cause great heart-burnings and jealousies among them.
8. They have never, to my knowledge, been denied medical treatment. One died lately in Singleton of consumption. He was taken the same care as if he had been a white man by the Benevolent Society, and when he died, was buried at their expense. And the medical gentlemen of this neighbourhood, Messrs. Glennie, Stelworthy, and Vallack, are always very attentive to them, when they hear of any who stand in need of professional assistance.
9. They are occasionally employed by the settlers in reaping, pulling corn, &c., &c., being remunerated in food, clothes, occasionally small wages, and I fear, sometimes by tobacco and rum. Mr Scott, of Glendon, had for a long time, two of them in his stables as horse breakers, and two others as shepherds, whom he paid with money wages, and rations. And there are now two from this tribe up country upon a cattle station of Mr. Bossley, under regular engagements. He speaks very highly of them.
10. They are in general indisposed to steady work, but they have ability and aptitude for almost every employment.
11. They may be about seven or eight half-castes, living with and after the manner of the Aborigines.
12. With the exception of a white man who lived with the blacks, and a black woman who cohabits with a white shepherd, there seems no disposition on the part of the white labouring population to amalgamate with them.
13. The aborigines are in friendly relations with the settlers in this District.
14. In the fruit season they occasionally rob orchards and vineyards; otherwise, I think that upon the whole they have a great respect for the white people's property.
15. The Aboriginal tribes in this District are friendly with each other; but there is always a petty warfare waging between them and the tribes of other Districts.
16. They do sometimes kill each other.
17. I am informed that infanticide is known among them, the victims being generally female; but from my own observations, I should be inclined to hold them up to many of the white populations as patterns of parental patience and affection.
18. I think it would be desirable to include them in the Masters' and Servants' Act, or to institute some other means of enabling them to recover wages. They complain greatly that the white men do not keep their promises, and urge as an excuse for not working, that they are cheated of their hire. My attention has been drawn to a late case of that sort in this immediate neighbourhood, but I know not what measures to take to see them righted. Some of them engaged, for certain wages, to reap the wheat of a small settler, and I am credibly informed, that they laboured most industriously, both early and late, but when they had finished their work they were dismissed without earnings, nor have they yet been able to get any remuneration. Cases of this sort militate greatly against their becoming steady and industrious. I would therefore humbly suggest that steps should be taken to prevent such cases from passing with impunity. Should the issue of blankets be again resumed, I would recommend that they be so branded, or otherwise marked, as to hinder the unprincipled of the white population from bartering rum for them, or indeed from possessing them under any circumstances. Some means should also be devised of rewarding and encouraging those who might be properly recommended by credible parties. Such a course might render them more anxious to obtain, and deserve the good opinion of the respectable inhabitants.

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From the Reverend John McConnell, Minister of the Church of England, Clarence River, 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1846:-

1. No person can say, to a certainty, what is the actual number of Aborigines in this district, but it is quite probable that they exceed three thousand, near one-half of which are children, and the number of males and females nearly equal.
2. It is quite probable that the number has increased one-fourth during the last five years.
3. The principal decrease has been among the adults.
4. Old age and violent deaths.
5. They are in a miserable condition; yet their means of subsistence is abundant – such as animals of chase, fish, roots, wild honey, &c.

6. There is no doubt that their ordinary means of subsistence has increased. Indeed the only part of their subsistence that has been disturbed by squatters, is the Kangaroo.
7. The blacks in this district never received any blankets, in consequence of which they suffer much from the winter's cold.
8. They have not been allowed any hospital or medical treatment in cases of the greatest need.
9. Very few of them have done anything for the settlers, with the exception of a few young persons that have been brought up with the white population. At stations, where the adults get food, they will occasionally work for a short time.
10. They have great strength of body, but are sedentary and indolent, and have no disposition for hard employment; yet, in time, the younger part of them may make excellent shepherds and stockmen.
11. There are no half-castes in this district.
12. There is not the least apparent disposition on the part of the labouring population, to amalgamate with the Aborigines so as to form families.
13. They are hostile with some of the settlers, and friendly with others. The hostilities have arisen from diverse causes; in some cases the Aborigines have attacked persons or property, without any direct offence; but it is quite probable in other cases they were injured by white men, although the sufferers may have been innocent. There have been about sixteen or eighteen collisions between the two races, within the last five years; the blacks, at different times, killed ten or twelve white men; in return, they have been pursued by the inhabitants, and unknown numbers of them been shot, for these offences, as well as for the destruction of property.
14. It is possible they have destroyed about sixteen hundred sheep, and one hundred head of cattle in this district; besides, they are frequently pilfering.
15. They have frequent disputes and engagement among themselves, but these are soon decided, with all hostilities abandoned; indeed, they may be said to be on friendly terms with each other.
16. Their number is not much diminished by their hostilities.
17. Infanticide is quite unknown among them.
18. If I had the least idea of the manner in which the Committee intends to promote the welfare of the Aborigines, I might be able to give some assistance. However, I would beg to state, that their welfare might be promoted with supplying them with blankets and small axes; but to do them any essential good, they must be sufficiently supplied with food and clothing, which will collect them together, make them stationary, and remove all necessity for their travelling. Then the younger part of them might receive such a religious education as would prepare them for a civilized life, and make them good neighbours and subjects. They appear capable of receiving an ordinary education; but until something of this kind is done for them, they will neither gain in number nor good qualities by coming to the generality of the stations. The greater part of the boys that have grown up at the stations, return to their tribes so soon as they come to man hood, and this is likely to be the case until a civilized society be formed of themselves.

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From the Reverend James Allan, Minister of the Church of England, Braidwood, 28<sup>th</sup> April, 1846:-

1. The probable number of blacks in the whole county of St Vincent, is one hundred and fifty.
2. Their number has diminished very much in the last ten years.
3. The decrease takes place amongst adults and children.
4. The decrease of the adults is chiefly caused by European disease, but that of the children by the small number of births, through the prostitution of the females.
5. Their condition is wretched in the extreme; from the destruction of their game they are almost famished with hunger and cold, and they obtain but a scanty supply of necessaries by begging.
6. No blankets were issued last year, and several old men and women pined away and died during winter.
7. They have not received any hospital treatment, or private medical aid that I know of.
8. They have no aptitude for settled employments; the few who are engaged as stockmen, do not continue constantly all year. The settlers allow them food, clothes, tobacco, and lodging, for their services.
9. There may be from fifteen to twenty half-castes of different ages, all following the habits of Aborigines.
10. There is no disposition in the whites to intermarry with them, but several shepherds of abandoned character, keep black women in their huts, and have children by them.
11. They are quite harmless towards the white inhabitants, and at peace among themselves; but the Murray blacks lately killed two Braidwood blacks, and drove the whole of them down to the sea coast, where they remain.
12. Their number has not been lessened much by wars with neighbouring tribes.
13. Infanticide is scarcely known, but it was customary with them to kill half-caste children.
14. I recommend or rather suggest to the Committee:-

First: That the blankets be larger and heavier than those issued heretofore.

Secondly: That a small ration of seconds flour be issued to them weekly by the Clerk of the Bench, in presence of the Clergyman.

Thirdly: That the children be brought up in private families, and sent to school with other children; (and I understand that the parents in general, will not object to give up the children for a small hire.)

Fourthly: That a small yearly sum be allowed by Government to every settler who shall employ and maintain an adult regularly on his establishment.

These I consider the most likely means to increase their comfort, wear them off their migratory habits, and make them useful in the lowest menial offices. To attempt more than this would be useless, as they can never be perfectly civilized. They have mental peculiarities and defects, which no education or training can alter or supply. Like Ishmael, they are "wild men" by nature and to raise them to a level with the whites, and impart to them the same tastes and habits, are things as impossible as to domesticate the wild duck, and break in the wild ass to labour. I think it a duty to state this distinctly, in order to put to an end to delusive speculations, and obviate the trouble and expense of trying to civilize them. I can suggest no means for putting a stop to their rapid decrease. Disease is continually festering among them, and though they cure it by the bark of the native hickory, yet they always die of consumption soon after. I do not think it would be of any use to surgeons to treat them in the usual way, for I understand that native hickory is specific for syphilitic disease, and not more fatal than mercury would be, to creatures exposed to cold, by lying on the ground. The race are evidently to become extinct, and nothing that man can do, can possibly prevent it.

NOTE.- It has just occurred to me since closing the foregoing letter, that medical men are most competent to give advice, how to prevent the rapid decrease of the Aborigines; and the Legislative Council can obtain the opinion of the Colonial Surgeons, and I have no doubt, of others free of expense. I beg to be pardoned for suggesting and earnestly recommending this course.

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From the Reverend Thomas Horton, Minister of the Church of England in the districts of Castle Hill and Dural, near Parramatta, 13<sup>th</sup> April 1846:-

SIR, In reply to your Circular forwarding queries respecting the Aboriginal natives, for the information of the Committee of the Legislative Council, to enquire into and report on the condition of the natives, I beg to inform you, that no such information can be communicated from hence, as, from all I can learn, that race has been extinct for many years, and it is very seldom, indeed, that a native passes districts of Castle Hill and Dural.

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From the Reverend Joseph Cooper, Minister of the Church of England for the districts of Falbrook and Jerry's Plains. Wollombi Bridge, 30<sup>th</sup> March, 1846:-

1. Uncertain; I have no means of ascertaining.
2. So far as I can learn, the number has diminished very considerably.
3. A number of adults have died, and few children born.
4. Dissipation and its consequences.
5. In this district there is no scarcity of the means of subsistence.
6. The country around has not been very much cleared, and their opportunities of obtaining food have been increased rather than otherwise.
7. I came to this district in January, 1844, since which time, no blankets have been issued.
8. There is no hospital in this district.
9. They are seldom employed by the settlers, but at such times are well paid; they cannot be induced to form permanent engagements.
10. None.
11. I have no means of ascertaining.
12. Not in this district.
13. Friendly.
14. None recently.
15. From personal knowledge, inoffensive.
16. No hostilities have occurred since my residence here.
17. I have no knowledge on this subject.

18. I have resided in this district two years, and regret that I cannot state any facts relative to the Aborigines, that could assist the Committee in its endeavours to promote their welfare. I am sorry that my limited knowledge of the Aborigines, their customs, and habits, prevent my giving more explicit or conclusive replies; I have, however, added below some few facts, ascertained by members of my family, that may perhaps slightly assist the humane deliberations of the Committee.\

The number of Aborigines has, without question, during late years, very sensibly diminished; they appear so totally unable to assimilate with Europeans, or to adopt their usages, that it is scarcely more than reasonable to suppose, after the lapses of a few more years, they must certainly disappear from amongst them; this decrease, undoubtedly, does not arise from the unkind treatment or cruelty of the settlers (speaking of those within my own knowledge), but, as I imagine, from their too readily yielding to habits of debauchery and dissipation, which, unfortunately, they very quickly acquire, without, as a class, exhibiting the slightest aptitude for useful employments. Some few youths are engaged as stock keepers, the inducement being, the permitted use of a horse, which they seem to enjoy; beyond this, few, if any, can be mentioned as servants of the settlers.

The aggregate number of blacks in this district being so small, the half-castes amount to but few; such are living after the manner of the Aborigines. In this particular district, the relations of the blacks towards each other are decidedly friendly, although the general characteristic of different tribes, is that of hostility, and though disease, dissipation &c., consequent on the renunciation of their native habits, have caused a diminution of their number, still, actual warfare has very materially assisted; where the tribes are so numerous, that the number constituting each must be very small, the destruction of eight men amounts to a very positive decrease; yet it has occurred, within the observation of persons living near me, that such a number were surprised in their camp, by an opposing tribe, and at once destroyed. This, of course, is but a solitary instance, yet, nevertheless, a proof of actual habits. Infanticide has been known amongst them; but not generally; cases have been observed, in which they have evidently, for some unknown cause, slain their children when but young; in one instance, more particularly alluded to as having been witnessed, the means employed for destroying the infant ( a half-caste) were most singular, favouring the idea that they were in observance of an appointed ceremonial, and one which they dared not shun. As a race, they appear affectionate and kind to their offspring, and are invariably delighted by any attention paid to them; they evince an extreme reluctance to separation, and seldom or ever prepare that they should yield their services to the whites for shelter or reward.

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From the Reverend William Hamilton, Minister of the Church of Scotland, Goulburn, 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1846:-

1. In the police district of Goulburn there are remnants of several distinct tribes of blacks – the Mulwaree – the Burra Burra – the Bungonia – the Lake George – and the Fish River tribes. Of the Mulwaree, there remains, so far as I can learn, not above five men and five or six women, and one child. Yet it appears, from a memorandum kept by the Clerk of Petty Sessions, that, in 1844, he issued fifteen blankets to as many men of this tribe, and that the supply was inadequate *for the male applicants*. On a previous year, to men, women, and children, of this and neighbouring tribes, he issued as many as sixty blankets. Of the Burra Burra tribe, I have reason to think there remain five or six men, not fewer women and several children. Of the Bungonia tribe, I believe there are still about like numbers. Of the Lake George and Fish River tribes, I can say nothing, but that the former is still pretty numerous, amounting probably to fifty souls and upwards.
2. & 3. The Aborigines of this district have no doubt greatly diminished during the last ten years, and the decrease has been in all classes of them; but of the extent of it I cannot write definitely.
4. The decrease of their number is, I apprehend, to be attributed chiefly to vicious intercourse of the females with white men, and to disease contracted through indulgence in drunkenness, and a change of habits, in some respects, without accommodation of the mode of life to such change in other respects.
5. Their condition is, for the most parts, of rambling beggars. They have no certain means of subsistence; yet they never want, obtaining always necessary food freely, or for work, or finding it for themselves in the bush.
6. Their original means of subsistence, has, no doubt, greatly diminished; so far as it consisted of kangaroo, and wild-fowl, it may be said to have entirely failed, and this through the presence of whites with fire-arms, and the numerous dogs kept at every grazing station.
7. Blankets have been issued for at least ten years, ending with 1844. They no doubt contributed immediately to the comfort of the blacks, otherwise they would not have shown so great eagerness to procure them; yet, I apprehend, they may have contributed to their contracting the rheumatism to which they are subject, the protection they afford against wet not being so complete as that afforded by the opossum cloak; their distribution may also have withdrawn a valuable motive to local industry. But having been begun, and the

- blacks being reduced to their present abject condition, I think the distribution of blankets ought to be continued; its cessation appears to have occasioned great dissatisfaction among them.
8. There were one or two blacks received into the Goulburn Hospital, while it was a convict institution, and supported entirely by government; and there has never been any case of refusal to admit them which I am aware. One who was some time in hospital, and had his arm amputated, was induced, by the rest of his tribe, to run away before his recovery was perfected.
  9. A large number of them are occasionally employed to strip bark, cut up fire wood, gather potatoes, carry messages, ride after cattle, and so forth, and are adequately remunerated with money, rations, tobacco, or whatever else they wish from the stores of the settlers; a few are more regularly employed; one has for two years been a hired shepherd at Teralga; I have heard of one in the same neighbourhood hired as a bullock driver, one or two are generally employed about the police barracks. Last season, at a station on the Fish River, a flock of sheep was shorn by blacks, and at Bungonia, several were engaged in reaping.
  10. Their aptitude for employment may be inferred from what has just been stated. What least circumscribes their liberty, is most congenial to their natural disposition and habits.
  11. I have seen a few half-caste children living as the Aborigines do; how many there are now I cannot say.
  12. One instance of such disposition has occurred. A white man living at the farm of Francis Cooper, Esq, Lake George, was married a few years ago, by the Reverend R. Cartwright, now of Gunning, to a female Aboriginal whom that clergyman had himself brought up and educated; they lived happily together for two or three years; but a separation has taken place, (it would appear from jealousy, on her part, of another woman – a white.) and she was lately, and probably is still living, as a hired domestic servant near Lake George. This female never associates with other Aborigines, and but for her complexion and features, would not supposed to be of the same race; she possesses a degree of intelligence, and an amount of religious knowledge, far surpassing those of a large proportion of white females, and bears an excellent character.
  13. The Aborigines of this district have always been on friendly terms with the settlers; yet I have been told, that long ago, one white was killed by the blacks on the Mulwaree.
  14. They appear never to have occasioned any destruction of property.
  15. They are peaceable and friendly amongst themselves.
  16. There is no reason to think that hostilities affected their number.
  17. I have no reason to think infanticide is practised among them; but I once heard a report respecting blacks at Limestone Plains, which led me to suspect, that half-caste children from five to ten years of age, are sometimes destroyed by them.
  18. The only facts of the kind, referred to by this query, of which I am cognizant, have already been noticed in answer to queries 9 and 12. Perhaps it might be found advisable to give a premium to any black, male or female, who continues steadily industrious for two or more years; and connecting this with a public distribution of blankets to the other blacks, might have a beneficial effect. Their susceptibility of religious and moral culture appears to me, from all I have seen of them, to be as great of that of the whites, who have contracted habits similarly unfavourable.

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From the Reverend Christopher Eipper, Minister of the Church of Scotland, Braidwood, 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1846:-

Among the various efforts for the benefit of the Aborigines, the establishment of missions among them, for the purpose of Christianizing and civilizing them, have appeared the most likely means of attaining that end; and accordingly such missions have been established, in several localities, at various periods, and by various Christian societies, to all of which the Colonial Government have extended liberal aid. All of these missions have, however, signally failed and been abandoned, without exception, I believe. The causes of these failures, may indeed have been partial ones, that is arising from the manner of conducting, and the men which conducted the mission; want of support; or the decrease of the aboriginal population; but all of them have suffered under one general and almost unavoidable hindrance, from want of a *fair field* for exertion. The work of missions among the Aborigines is peculiarly a work of time and patience; requiring the continued, unabated, and sincere devotion, not of a few years, but a generation. No sooner, however, has a mission been established and commenced operations, than by the gradual or sudden influx of population, it becomes surrounded by colonists; the natives are exposed to other influence than that of the missionaries, which, though it were not contaminating them – as it unhappily does, generally speaking – forms, along with their roving habits, the engine of the mission's destruction. I am borne out by the history of missions in this country in the assertion and prediction, that wherever the obstacle exists, it will render every effort abortive. This has been the fate of the mission to the Aborigines at Moreton Bay, with which I have been connected until 1843. It was undertaken at the insistence of the Reverend Dr. Lang, M.C., in 1838, when Moreton Bay was

still a penal settlement so as to place the mission beyond protection, nor had we any means of removing at our disposal, and the missionary settlement was formed at no greater distance than seven miles from Brisbane Town. No sooner, however, had the preliminary labours of clearing, erecting premises, &c., been brought to a satisfactory close, and the apprehension of danger being removed, the missionaries were left at leisure to turn their whole attention upon their proper object and business, than the vicinity of the mission to the settlement was felt a serious inconvenience; and this evil was soon afterwards increased when Moreton Bay ceased to be a penal settlement and stations were formed all over the district. Not to speak of the evil examples of convicts, with whom chiefly the Aborigines associated, and the fearful prostitution which soon became current among the Aborigines which yielded them, without labour, an ample supply of all their wants, it was not to be expected that there should be an uniformity in the conduct of the settlers towards the natives; the restraint established at the missionary settlement, both as regarded their conduct, and the supply of food, became irksome, and when they could obtain that on easier terms and be less restrained, it was natural that they should resort to other places; besides which, the means of the missionaries were at no time ample, and frequently so scanty, that they were themselves subject to many privations. Amidst many struggles for support, the mission, seemed at last, in 1842, by the interest which His Excellency the Governor took in it, in a fair way to be placed upon a better footing and a fair field. The Governor proposed to remove it farther northward into a tract of country situated between Moreton Bay and Wide Bay, called the Bunnya Country, from a nut, growing plentifully there, and known by that name which affords subsistence to the Aborigines for some months every year. An expedition was undertaken by the missionaries, and a suitable place for a new settlement found by them. Six months afterwards the Commissioner of Crown Lands at Moreton Bay was directed by His excellency to explore that district also, and to report upon its eligibility, His Excellency having already prohibited the occupation by squatters, but when the Commissioner had reported upon the results of his expedition and observations on the country, concluding with a recommendation to establish the mission at Frazer's or Hervey Island, which stretches across the Wide Bay from south to north, the project of removing the mission had been abandoned by the Governor for want of funds. With the intimation of the issue of this matter – after the mission had been kept in suspense from April 1842 till July 1843 – was likewise received another decision His Excellency had come to, arising from the same cause, viz., that the assistance hitherto granted by the Government, in the shape of contributions from the Colonial Treasury, equal to the amount of collections and donations from the public would be no longer enjoyed. The depressions of the Colony at the time deprived the missionaries of the hope of receiving assistance from the public; and under these circumstances the mission was abandoned by the clerical members of the mission; the laymen continuing to occupy a section of ground which, at first, the Government had allotted the use of the mission, and seeking to support themselves, as well as they can, by the labour of their hands.

The hindrances arising from the wandering habits of the Aborigines, the German missionaries did their best to lessen by wandering with them, inasmuch as regularly a small party was absent from the settlement; the hindrances from want and failure of support they did bear patiently and to show that they were not extravagant in their notions I may mention, that they would have been quite content with certain and unconditional assistance from the Colonial Government of three hundred pound a year, which sum would have been deemed sufficient to supply the wants of ten males, seven females, and upwards of a dozen children, but to the formidable and insurmountable obstacle – the contact with the white population – they had to succumb. That obstacle cannot be removed except by a resort to violent measures, which, if successful, will lead to the expatriation, if unsuccessful, to the extinction of the Aborigines. The expatriation of the Aborigines, were it to include the whole of the Aboriginal population, would be hardly practicable; and it is otherwise so questionable, that I should feel difficulty in pronouncing even an opinion in its favour. But what consideration the plan of forming one or more penal settlements for the Aborigines alone might deserve, I leave your Committee to weigh. The grounds upon which I venture to make this suggestion I derive from the circumstances, that the Aborigines are declared to be under the protection of, and amenable to the British Law; its protection, I grant, they have often, and do often, undeservedly enjoy; as to accounting themselves, and being in reality amenable to the law, very little consideration and observation will show, that it is a very shadowy pretence. Life and property are frequently taken by them with impunity; and so long as nothing else but the course of regular justice is opposed to that lawless course of proceeding, many lives and much property will be sacrificed. It is true that public and private retribution has now and then been made upon the Aborigines, and no doubt the innocent have paid with their blood and life for the misdeed of their brethren. Would it not have been more humane and far more subservient to the colonist's benefit, to have by martial law, not of blood, but of captivity, being proclaimed in any disturbed district, collected a number of Aborigines, men, women and children, and conveyed them to some island to form a penal settlement, where, by expatriation, they would be justly punished for their misdeeds, would be prevented from giving further trouble, and above all things would, in the formation of such settlement, offer the indispensable postulation nowhere else to be found – a far field for missionary enterprises.

From my personal experience in the missionary work of this country, I would upon embarking in such an undertaking again, insist *ab initio* upon three things; and these are first, ample means; second, entire separation from the whites; and third, a locality which would present natural obstacles or checks to the wandering of the natives – an island. Under such conditions, I offered first to His excellency the Governor, through the Commissioner of Crown lands, and afterwards to the Bishop of Australia, through the Reverend Mr. Gregor, Moreton Bay, in the year 1843, to undertake a mission to the Aborigines at

Wide Bay, to be formed upon Frazer's Island, which, if the Government were to prohibit its occupation by the whites, is in every respect admirably adapted for the purposes of a mission. I am still ready to enter upon such an undertaking under these conditions; and I believe I should find no difficulty in finding willing assistants in such work in the German lay missionaries at Moreton Bay, who, amounting to eleven men, all mechanics, will form a beneficial accession of strength, and a valuable acquisition, to teach the native youth their handicraft, and by their pious conduct, to exhibit unto them the blessings and advantages of Christianity. It might be even advisable to combine with such missionary settlement that of a penal one for Aboriginal offenders, if the plan I suggested or any other were acted upon.

Having now submitted to your Committee my experience and views in regard to the mission to the Aborigines, I deem it requisite to add, that it is not from a desire of seeking worldly advantage I have thus come forward in offering to undertake a mission. I have already tasted sufficiently of the bitterness and disappointment of a missionary life, to seek it again for any other but a sincere desire of spending my life in efforts for their amelioration. I am not so enthusiastic or sanguine to expect great results will ensure, and that the success will reward the exertion. I have long considered it, as already said, a work of time and patience and I take my stand not upon the prospect of success, but on the ground of *duty*. It is the *duty* of the Colonial Government to take measures for the benefit of the Aborigines and they will find men who will feel it their *duty*, to carry these measures into effect.

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From the Reverend William Ross, Minister of the Church of Scotland, Paterson, 5<sup>th</sup> May 1846:-

1. The probable number of Aborigines in this district is about one hundred and fifty. The males are the most numerous; there is however a fair proportion of females; the number of children is comparatively small.
2. The number has greatly diminished; within the last seven years the decrease has certainly been one third of the number. About seven years I have seen eighty and ninety Aborigines encamping in the town of Paterson; the greatest number at the present never exceeds twenty or twenty-five.
3. The decrease appears to me to have taken place mainly among the adults. The number of children observed among them by me at any time, was so small, that the decrease could not arise from deaths or casualties among them. I may here remark, that many of the finest young men, existing even three or four years ago, have now disappeared.
4. The causes are in my opinion two – The vice of drunkenness, to which they are both male and female, very much addicted; and disease contracted through the intercourse of their women with the whites. There may be other causes but these are the principal.
5. Their condition is very wretched; their means of subsistence is lessened to a very great extent.
6. Their means of subsistence has greatly diminished. There are few or no kangaroos; they have either been destroyed, or they have retired back from the haunts of men. The kangaroo was chief food of the natives. They still have abundance of opossum, of fish, and cobbera.
7. Blankets have been issued for many years previous to 1845, when the issue of them was stopped. I know of no bad effects from giving the unfortunate Aborigines blankets; we have, in a great measure, been the means of depriving them of the source from which they formerly derived their warm clothing in abundance, and it seems cruel to withhold the blankets; I certainly think it would be highly advisable, both on the ground of principle and charity, to resume the distribution.
8. I am not aware of any instance in which they have been refused hospital or medical treatment in case of need.
9. Very few of them are employed, for they will not work; the settlers would willingly employ them in various ways if they would only work; when any of them does work, the remuneration is given in flour and beef, tea, sugar, tobacco, and articles of clothing; money may sometimes be given, but rarely, for it is the very worst remuneration that can be given.
10. Their habits are well known; whatever may be their "aptitude for employment" their habits have no tendency in that direction.
11. The majority of the children seem to be half castes; they live after the manner of the Aborigines; I cannot state the number of half-castes.
12. There is not.
13. They are friendly; no collision or loss of life has occurred since I came to the district; except the two children murdered by the notorious Melville and his brother at Stanhope; and two at Butterwyck near Hinton, by a black named "Flash Jemmy"; but provocation is believed, was given by the parents of the unfortunate children.
14. I have never heard of any wilful destruction of property by the Aborigines in this district.
15. They are friendly among themselves.
16. Their number has been affected neither directly or indirectly by their hostilities since I arrived in the district.

17. I have never known of an instance of infanticide; I have heard of it been practised among them formerly; they seem to be very much attached to their children.
18. In answer to this question I have only to say that I do not well know how the Committee will be able to promote the welfare of the adult Aborigines; the Committee may succeed in devising some method of ameliorating the present condition of the blacks, by supplying the most pressing wants and necessities. To bring them within even the most extreme limit of civilization, would, I fear, from their habits, be impossible.
- A fairer prospect however opens in regard to the children, to whom the Committee should chiefly direct their measures; it might be possible to form a small establishment in the district, into which, with the aid of the Legislature and the benevolent, these youthful wanderers of the forest might be gathered, and taught the principles of religion, and brought up in habits of industry. This would make them useful members of the community; while it would be a small atonement for the neglect of the past. If however something be not speedily done, the opportunity will be lost in these parts; the poor neglected Aborigines are fast hastening out of the land of the living; so that it is the duty of the Legislature to preserve the rising generation from that ignorance and degradation in which their fathers have lived and died. The children are few, but still their claims are very great, and though but a miserable remnant, they ought to have a name and place in the land of their ancestors.

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From the Reverend Robert Stewart, A.M., Minister of the Church of Scotland, Newcastle, 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 1846:-

Sir, Some of the Aborigines are occasionally to be seen in Newcastle; I regret, however, that I do not know enough of them to be able to return answers to the questions you have sent me.

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From the Reverend James Forbes, Minister of the Church of Scotland, Melbourne, 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1846:-

1&2. The Protectors, having, as is reported, taken a census of the Aboriginal population, will be able to give the Committee accurate information. A very appalling decrease has taken place in their numbers within the last eight years, over which period only, my observation has extended.

3. Among both; the number of children under seven years of age is surprisingly small.

4. Partly to collisions with the whites in the earlier days of the Colony, partly to internal feuds and murders; but chiefly to disease. Catarrhal and inflammatory diseases seem to have been caused by the change in their food – changes in their habits, and diminished ability to endure cold. Profligate intercourse with depraved whites has also been a fertile source of disease and death, and of a diminution in the number of births; from the same cause infanticide has been frequent.

5&6. Their condition is very degraded. The tribe near Melbourne subsist chiefly on bread, mutton, &c, obtained by begging from the town people and neighbouring settlers; something being obtained for petty services, such as chopping wood, &c. They also live on indigenous roots to some extent.

The large game on which they formerly depended so much had nearly disappeared from this vicinity. This has resulted from colonization; sheep and flour are new to them, and for these they are indebted to the presence of the Colonists.

Taking all things into account, they are probably as well fed now as they were before their country was colonized; but I apprehend the change in the kind of food, and in the manner of obtaining it, has been prejudicial; the substitution of mendicancy for the activity of chance, must have been physically as well as mentally injurious. I am sorry to add that they are no strangers to the use and deteriorating effects of ardent spirits.

7. The Protectors will be able to say how many blankets have been distributed and when. I cannot speak from personal knowledge as to the effect of giving them; but, reasoning from general principles, I should doubt the expediency of giving them indiscriminately, and at uncertain intervals, as they have been given hitherto. A temporary supply must render the natives more liable to cold and similar affections when it becomes exhausted.

I conceive it would be beneficial to give blankets to the old and infirm, regularly at the beginning of winter, and to others as rewards for diligence and good conduct, but not otherwise. It would, I think, be very beneficial to promise and give them a continued supply for labour performed. A blanket is the most suitable kind of covering that can be given to them; other articles of clothing are generally torn or thrown away; this may happen to the blanket too in warm weather.

8. On this subject I refer to the Protectors.

9. I know of none regularly employed near this place; the Melbourne tribe are frequently employed in chopping wood and such like things, for which they are remunerated in food and clothing. I believe the settlers generally repay them in the same way for any occasional service they may perform. A number of the Western Port tribe are embodied in the Native Police, and are considered serviceable.

10. Their habits are restless, volatile and erratic; having none but the merest animal wants, they have no influence impelling them to regular exertion. I have no doubt, however, that they might, by judicious management, be made useful for many things, such as stock keeping, wood cutting, splitting, &c. They will not continue to exert themselves for any considerable length of time at once; nor will they attend long to the same object, or the same employments. Still something might be made of them by varying their employment and giving them frequent intervals relaxation – just as is done with children.

11. I know of no half-castes; many are said to be born, but they are not permitted to live.

12. None; unhappily there has been, at various times, a deplorable amount of profligate intercourse between the two races.

13. Near Melbourne the relationship between the races has been friendly, and have been so for eight years. In the interior collisions have been frequent; these have arisen sometimes from settlers indulging the natives for a time about their stations, then getting tired of them, which has led to quarrels – often, there is reason to believe, from licentious intercourse between shepherds and black women – at other times, from the natives spearing cattle, and stealing sheep, sometimes from necessity, sometimes from a spirit of mischief.

14. The Commissioners of Crown Lands will be the best authority on this point; my impression is, that the loss of property has been small in comparison of the loss of Aboriginal life, reckoning from the commencement of colonization in Port Phillip.

15. Between the various tribes, there is always more or less a feud subsisting; each tribe having its own territory, wanderers from other tribes are suspected of hostile purposes and not a few of them have been killed; children of remote tribes, though orphans, both harmless and defenceless, have also repeatedly fallen victims to this murderous disposition.

I may remark, that among all nations that are sub-divided into tribes, similar feuds exist, and are productive of similar consequences. This is observable among branches of the human family, far more advanced towards civilization than the Aborigines of Australia.

16. Not so much as by other causes before mentioned; it is said, that in this respect colonization has arrested what was formerly a great cause of diminution in the numbers of the natives.

17. Infanticide I believe to be common; half-caste children are universally destroyed at birth.

18. I firmly believe the natives to be capable of great improvement; they are not deficient in natural capacity, by any means. Their memories are retentive and accurate, their powers of observation acute, their faculty of imitation remarkable, and in their judgements of the conduct of others, there is not want of discrimination between right and wrong; all these are important elements of a docile character.

On the other hand, they are very impatient of restraint, jumping from one thing to another with the greatest volatility, and almost incurably erratic. They are sunk in the deepest moral depravity from which their intercourse with our people has, to say the least, not tended to raise them; these are serious obstacles to their improvement.

I would, however, not despair of them, and I take the liberty to submit to the Committee the following suggestions:-

First: from the existence of the feuds already referred to, and from the fact that each tribe has its own territory to which is attached, the various tribes must be dealt with separately; I would suggest that a reserve be made within the limits of each tribe, separated as much as possible from stations of settlers, on which a homestead should be provided; let a pious Missionary be placed there, with a schoolmaster, and an agricultural overseer, all of whom to devote themselves exclusively to the Aborigines. Let this be the only place where blankets are distributed, or food given; and let the natives be discouraged in every possible way from visiting the stations. I would not recommend compulsion in any way, but the settlers should be urged to withhold food and clothing and not to harbour wanderers about their places. In Europe the encouragement of mendacity, is found to demoralize and deteriorate the mendicant; and it does the same here.

Second: everything should be done to keep the Aborigines out of towns; they are a nuisance to the inhabitants, and they receive no good themselves, only evil; this cannot be done, cannot be indeed attempted, till an asylum is provided for them, presenting some inducements for them to remain at it.

Third: whatever is given to them in the shape of food, clothing or otherwise, should be only given for some service performed; whatever is done should be well paid for, but the idle should be made to feel that their indolence brings punishment.

Fourth: in selecting reserves for their benefit, care should be taken not to fix out a spot, to which, from superstitious associations or otherwise, they are averse; their whims, especially their superstitious whims, are not to be dispelled by any arbitrary measures of their superiors.

Fifth: it should be a primary object with all engaged for their benefit, to learn their language, which, barbarous as it is, is to them as an instrument of thought; their interest can never effectually be promoted, till their thinking, their modes of thoughts and superstitions have been ascertained; and these can be ascertained only through the medium of their language. An aptitude for acquiring language seems an indispensable qualification for all employed for their benefit.

Sixth: immediate attention requires to be paid to the protection of frontier districts, - the Lower Murray, Gipps' Land, and such like places. It is in the early period of their intercourse, that collisions between the colonists and the Aborigines are most apt to occur. Here protection is much needed by both parties. The Chief Protector and one of his assistants are located in the immediate neighbourhood of Melbourne; one or both of them might with advantage move the scene of their operations to the frontiers, where mediation between the pioneers of colonization and the original occupants of the soil is much needed.

Seventh: the legal incapacity for giving evidence, seems to me, a serious evil. It is true the Aborigines are much given to falsehood; but so, to a fearful degree, are a large number of the white population. I should require corroborating evidence, were I a jurymen, in the one case, as much as in the other; and I am of opinion that a jury would easily estimate Aboriginal evidence, taken in connexion with accompanying circumstances, at its true value.

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From the Reverend John M'Garvie, D.D., Minister of the Church of Scotland, Sydney, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1846:-

1. The number of Aborigines in the district of Sydney, is unknown.
  2. Their number has diminished; extent unknown.
  3. The decrease has been among the adults chiefly; there are few children existing.
  4. The cause of the decrease in this district are change of subsistence, and diminished supply; as well as bad habits contracted from the whites.
  6. Their ordinary means of subsistence has diminished, from increase of buildings, and from improvements on land formerly waste.
  7. I have seen the good effects of distributing blankets, and think the practice should be resumed.
  8. None have applied at the infirmary; but formerly some applied at the Dispensary for medicine; it was never refused.
  12. In answer to the question whether there is any disposition on the part of the white labouring population, to amalgamate with the Aborigines, so as to form families, I beg leave to say I know of one instance only, on the Hawkesbury in 1826.
  17. That infanticide is known among them is generally believed; but I have always found them much attached to their children.
  18. In reference to Sydney, I am of the opinion that the Government should have a place set apart where *food, raiment and residence* could be obtained by the natives, whenever they were inclined to resort to it, from necessity; but I would not compel them to take up their permanent abode there; nor would I permit the supply of more food to them, out of the station, than might serve for a few days in the bush.
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From the Reverend Purves, Presbyterian Minister, Port Macquarie, 7<sup>th</sup> April, 1846:-

1. The probable number of Aborigines in this district is about one hundred.
2. Diminished; perhaps one third in five years.
3. The decrease has been among both the adults and children.
4. Our possession of their lands, and their general intercourse with white men, has been the cause of the decrease in this district.
5. Their condition is not by any means destitute. Their means of subsistence are hunting and fishing.
6. The produce of their hunting may be somewhat diminished, although very little.
7. I cannot state the precise time when blankets ceased to be distributed; if resumed the distribution ought to be under proper superintendence, and if possible, means taken to prevent them parting with them.
8. Hospital and medical treatment in case of need has been allowed, I believe, at the expense of the Government.
9. None are regularly employed by the settlers, as far as I know; but many are employed by the settlers at the time of the maize harvest, when they receive food chiefly as remuneration.
10. Their habits are unsettled.
11. I have seen no grown up half-castes; almost all the children are this description, and they live with the Aborigines.
12. There is very little, if any disposition on the part of the white labouring population, to amalgamate with the Aborigines, so as to form families.
13. The Aborigines are in friendly relations with the settlers of this district.
14. Very little destruction of property has been occasioned by the Aborigines.
15. The relations of the Aborigines among themselves in this district are, I believe, friendly.
17. Infanticide is known among them; it is reported to a small extent, but I have not learned that it has ever been satisfactorily proved in any case.
18. The Aborigines suffer much from intoxicating liquors, and they generally obtain them when they come to where they are to be got. The half-castes are most of them fine children, evidently capable of instruction, and, of being trained to the useful arts of life.

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From the Reverend Colin Stewart, Minister of the Church of Scotland, Vale of Clwyd, 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1846:-

1. The number of Aborigines in this district is nine adult males, nine females, and four children, all in all, twenty two.
2. The number has diminished fully one half with in the last five years.
3. The decrease has been both among adults and children, but chiefly among the adults.
4. The causes to which I attribute the decreases are, their irregular mode of life, exposure to cold, and disease contracted from intercourse with the white population.
5. Their condition appears to very miserable, arising from their irregular and indolent habits, and not from want of sufficient means of subsistence. Their means of subsistence are what they collect from hunting in the bush, chiefly opossums. They receive occasional allowances of beef, flour, tea, sugar and tobacco from the settlers, either as rewards for service rendered or by way of charity; but such supplies being of an irregular nature, I do not consider that they ameliorate the condition of the Aborigines; they render them less active and diligent in looking after their ordinary food.

6. There is no doubt that certain parts of what used to be their means of subsistence has diminished. The kangaroo and emu have almost wholly disappeared from this district; but the loss of these animals is more than made up to them by what they receive from the settlers.
7. There used to be an issue of blankets to the Aborigines in this district till within the last two years, when it ceased. What may have been the effect of giving blankets I do not know; nor am I aware of any bad effects arising from the cessation. It is my opinion that the distribution of blankets is not of much benefit to the Aborigines; as far as I have observed, they either parted with them or very soon destroyed them. The cloaks they make of the skins of opossums for themselves, are more comfortable and useful to them; with these they can supply themselves in abundance. From the above reasons, it is not my opinion that the distribution of blankets is advisable; though, perhaps, where they used to be at one time given, it would have been as well to continue the issue, especially until the Aborigines fully understood that the issue was to cease.
8. There being no hospital in this district, I am not aware of any application having been made either by themselves, or any of the settlers on their behalf, for admission into the Bathurst Hospital; whenever any of them is sick, he receives from the nearest establishment such simple medications as the settlers keep for their own people, and in the cases of danger they have been attended to by Dr. Auld, the medical gentleman who resides in the district, of course gratuitously.
9. Occasionally all the adult males are employed, chiefly at sheep washing and looking after cattle. The only cases in this district that I know of them entering regular employment are two, one with James Walker Esq., J.P., Wallerawang, and the other with H. Atkins, Esq., P.M., Hartley; the former one at present assisting his stockman and going messages, and the latter used to have one of them shepherding; they are paid wages as other servants.
- 10.
11. There is one grown up female half-caste, and the four children are half-castes; the females live with the Aborigines, but there are no adult males with them. Indeed, it is remarked that when the male half-castes are grown up, they disappear from among the Aborigines, though they lived with them when young.
12. I am not aware of any disposition on the part of the white population to amalgamate with the Aborigines as to form families. I was applied to in one instance to marry a white man to an Aboriginal woman, but she has lived from her infancy with the whites. I declined however to marry them as from the woman not having had a Christian education, she could not understand the nature of the marriage covenant.
13. The Aborigines are in friendly relations with the settlers of this district.
14. There has been no destruction of property, as far as I am aware; on the contrary the settlers are very desirous of the Aborigines camping near their establishments; as they consider them a protection.
15. The Aborigines of this district agree among themselves, but they are in hostile relations with those of Bathurst.
16. Their number is diminished in consequence of these hostilities. They not unfrequently kill some on each side, either in actual warfare, or as it most commonly happens, by surprise at night. The Bathurst Aborigines killed one of this district tribe in January last, and those of this district are evidently looking for the opportunity for revenge.
17. I am not aware of infanticide among the Aborigines of this district.
18. I am not prepared to state facts that would be of much assistance to the Committee. I would simply observe that I consider it would tend to promote the welfare of the Aborigines were they made amenable to British laws for the injuries they commit against one another especially the taking away of life; the fear of reprisal at night renders them often miserable. The murder of the Bathurst Aborigines, they replied in rather an insolent manner that he had no right to interfere, as it was only the blacks they were injuring, and not the whites. Several instances of the same nature came under my notice, one of which I beg to relate. Being on a missionary visit to the Lachlan River in March last year I learned that about the 16<sup>th</sup> March a team belonging to Mr Thomas Kyte, of Bathurst, camped at Gunning, a station of Mr William Hood; the bullock driver had an Aborigine from the lower part of the river as his mate; this Aborigine was attacked by those of the middle district of the river, and in defiance of the bullock driver, and several other white people who were there, was severely speared and wounded. The consequence of this, and such like instances is, that the Aborigines are afraid to leave their own tribes and be so useful as they otherwise might be. But to promote their true welfare must be by religious instruction and Christian missions. The little success that has hitherto attended such missions is rather discouraging, but should by no means deter the Christian legislator from further efforts. I have no doubt in my own mind but that if the subject was fully examined and weighed, the want of success would be found to be partly in the missions themselves, as well as in the Aborigines

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From the Reverend Robert Wylde, Minister of the Church of England, Kergunia (by Albury), 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1846:-

Sir, I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of the Circular of the Committee appointed by the Legislative Council to report on the condition of the Aborigines. I much regret that my short and partial residence in this part of the country prevents me from giving on my own knowledge such information as would be of any value to the Committee in furtherance of their laudable object. I regret, also, that owing to my absence on a journey to and from Sydney, the Circular reached me so late as to preclude the possibility of making such enquiries as would have enabled me to give satisfactory replies to the queries which it contains.

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From the Reverend James Goold, Minister of the Church of Rome, Campbelltown, 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1846:-

Sir, I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 17<sup>th</sup> instant, and in reply beg leave to state that no tribe of the Aborigines has resided in this district since my appointment to it. I regret, therefore, that I cannot give the information required by the committee.

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From the Reverend John McKenny, Wesleyan Minister, Windsor, 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 1846:-

1. The probable number of Aborigines in this District is sixty-five, forty men, fifteen women and ten children.
  2. The number has diminished greatly within the last five or ten years.
  3. The decrease has been chiefly among the adults.
  4. The decrease is attributable to their removal to other districts, and having so few children.
  5. The Aborigines are becoming civilized of later years; they subsist upon animals found in the bush, and by selling honey, currants &C., to the white inhabitants.
  6. Their ordinary means of subsistence does not appear to either have diminished or increased.
  7. Blankets were formerly issued; I cannot tell you from what period. I am informed they generally sold them for liquor; the issue has ceased. I do not know what has been the effect of its cessation, or whether it would be advisable to resume the distribution.
  8. I am not aware of hospital or medical treatment being applied for.
  9. I am informed about five are occasionally employed by settlers in farming labour; they remunerated with provisions, and a little money.
  10. They are generally of lazy habits.
  11. There are a few half-castes in this District living with the Aborigines.
  12. There is no disposition on the part of the white labouring population to amalgamate with the Aborigines so as to form families.
  13. The Aborigines are friendly with the settlers.
  14. No destruction of property has been occasioned by the Aborigines in this District.
  15. The Aborigines are friendly among themselves.
  16. Answered by No. 15.
  17. Infanticide is believed to be unknown among the Aborigines in this District.
  18. I am not prepared to offer any other facts that will assist the Committee.
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From the Reverend Edward Sweetman, Wesleyan Minister, Melbourne, Port Phillip, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1846:-

Sir, With respect to the Circular which I had the honour to receive, containing questions relating to the Aboriginal population of this District, I beg to say that in consequence of my time being entirely occupied by my pastoral duties in my own Church, I am not able to forward you any replies.

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From the Reverend Jonathan Innes, Wesleyan Minister, Campbelltown, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1846:-

1. Six women, seven men, one boy, and three girls; total, seventeen.
2. That they have diminished I have not the slightest doubt; but to what extent I am not able to say.
3. I am not able to ascertain.
4. To want of clothing in the winter season; the diminution of their regular resources of food, e.g., kangaroo &c., and the vicious habits which they have contracted from profligate Europeans.
5. They subsist principally upon opossums, with the assistance of irregular supplies of food, which they receive from the settlers.
6. I believe their native food has diminished such as kangaroo and opossums, and that it has been occasioned by an increase in the European population, and the cultivation of the land.
7. I believe none since the time of Governor Macquarie.
8. I am not aware they have recently received either.
9. I am not certain of any being regularly employed and receiving wages as servants.
10. I am not aware of any.
11. There are one woman and four children – half-caste, who are living after the manner of the Aborigines.
12. I am not aware of any.
13. I believe they are on peaceable terms with the settlers. I know of no loss of life which has been occasioned by hostility between the two classes.
14. I am not aware of any.
15. As far as I can learn they are of a friendly nature.
16. I believe not.
17. None.
18. The above is all the information which I can furnish. I feel it very difficult to suggest anything with regard to their future welfare.

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**A COPY OF THE CIRCULAR WAS ADDRESSED TO:**

- 62 – Clergymen of the Church of England
- 29 – Clergymen of the Church of Scotland
- 32 – Clergymen of the Church of Rome, and
- 12 – Wesleyan Ministers.

In reply to which the foregoing answers only have been received.

*Legislative Council Office*

*Sydney, September, 1846*

*Wm. MACPHERSON*

*Clerk of the Legislative Council*