

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

# GOVERNMENT RESIDENT'S REPORT ON NORTHERN TERRITORY FOR THE YEAR 1887.

No. 95/88.

South Australia, Northern Territory: Office of the Government Resident,  
Palmerston, January 1st, 1888.

Sir—I have the honor to place before you my Report upon the affairs and the progress of the Northern Territory for the year 1887.

In consequence of my visit to Adelaide, at the request of the late Government, and the time of my return, no half-yearly report was issued on July 1st, 1887. During my absence Mr. Justice Pater was appointed Acting Government Resident. If it should meet with your approval, I propose in future to issue only an annual report containing departmental reports and statistics. I shall, however, forward reports on any subjects of interest which may arise, and information regarding the revenue at the quarterly period, so that you will be kept thoroughly informed of the financial position of the Northern Territory.

### PASTORAL.

The year 1887 has marked a decided advance in the progress and stability of pastoral enterprise. This is shown not so much by the increased area of land under lease, as by the area declared to be stocked. The wild speculative taking up of thousands of square miles at sixpence per square mile rent by persons who were entirely unconnected with squatting, who never intended to be squatters, has had its natural reaction. As the period for declaring the leases stocked drew to a close, and renewals were only granted to those who had made *bonâ fide* efforts to place stock upon the country they held, these speculative holders were compelled to relinquish great areas which had been locked against legitimate enterprise for periods varying from three to five years. The total area declared to be stocked up to December 31st, 1887, is 200,817 square miles, which leaves 331,385 miles without a hoof or horn. The area declared stocked on December 31st, 1886, was 183,883 square miles, which shows an increase in stocking to the extent of 16,934 square miles. The estimated number of sheep is 80,513, of horned cattle 190,427, of horses 7,853, making a gross total of stock of all kinds in the Northern Territory 278,792.

The real progress in the pastoral industry is indicated by the increased confidence of the pioneer lessees in the extensive improvements undertaken in the comparatively large number of cattle droved successfully to southern markets from even as far north as the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria, and in the direct introduction of English capital, by the formation of the North Australian Territory Company, to develop the extensive leasehold and freehold properties held by Mr. C. B. Fisher.

This last event marks the beginning of a new epoch in Northern Territory pastoral occupation. Hitherto the northern portion of the Territory has been depending almost entirely upon the enterprise and capital of the eastern colonies, Dr. Brown and Messrs. Tennant & Love being the two chief exceptions. In securing the active co-operation of English investors who possess large city connections, after most careful investigation on their part of the freehold land and leases, the suitability of the soil and climate for stock breeding and fattening and cultivation has received a signal confirmation. For this, as for the successful stocking of the north coast of Australia, the honor is due to Mr. C. B. Fisher. The freehold land of the company is 40,772 acres, and the gross leasehold area 34,000 square miles, of which it is probable 10,000 square miles will be surrendered.

During the period in which the negotiations for the sale of these properties were carried through, the work of development and stocking was energetically prosecuted. Mr. H. W. H. Stevens, J.P., the general manager, informs me that a line of fencing, thirty miles in length towards the Adelaide river, and another of fifty miles going in an easterly direction, both starting from Glencoe, have been erected. The easterly line will ultimately be taken out to the Alligator rivers, and enclose 10,000 square miles of pastoral country. At the head waters of the Alligator rivers a new station, named Gerowoo, the native name of the creek on which the homestead is built, has been established. Gerowoo is about seventy miles east of Glencoe. Eighteen hundred breeding cattle have been placed upon it.

Since his return from London, where he assisted Mr. Murray Smith in floating the North Australian Territory Company, Mr. Stevens has visited Java and Singapore, and has found in both islands a good market for Australian fat cattle.

On receiving the sanction of the London board of directors, shipping operations will immediately commence. The place of shipment will be at the Beatrice Hills, where 5,000 acres have been fenced into small paddocks for the reception of fat cattle from the back country, and where, also, shipping yards and wharf are being erected.

Captain Maclear states:—"Port Darwin is of great importance as the terminus of the Australian cable; and in time of war it would be necessary to defend this, either by keeping one or two corvettes in the neighborhood or by batteries erected at the entrance of the harbour. \* \* \* \* \*  
 "Port Darwin would prove a valuable station for protecting the China and 'Australian trade in time of war.' \* \* \* \* \* As an arsenal Port Darwin is the only suitable place that I am aware of in 'North Australia, and for that it is well adapted.'"

It is but natural that those who are interested in Port Darwin should desire that Captain Maclear's opinions are correct. Having seen both places, he was capable of forming a correct judgement. He was here for some months. He writes on Port Darwin without instituting invidious comparisons with Thursday Island and on the merits and claims of Port Darwin itself. Admiral Tryon writes as if he held a brief for Thursday Island, and as if one material object he had in view was, to contradict Captain Maclear, and disparage Port Darwin. For a State paper it has too much the air of advocacy of a foregone conclusion. To say that Thursday Island is of "infinitely greater strategic value than Port Darwin," is ludicrous to those who know the two places. To say that the value of Port Darwin is in the womb of the future, is to use the language of rhetoric instead of that of simple fact and scientific accuracy.

I deprecate the instituting of comparisons between Thursday Island and Port Darwin except as to which has superior claims as an arsenal. Each place has its strategic importance; both should be coaling stations; both should be defended. But to compare the spacious harbour of Port Darwin with the narrow waters of Thursday Island is absurd. To say that Port Darwin is south of the line of trade and commerce, when, except in a few instances during the tea season, Port Darwin is the first port of call and the last of departure of the entire steam traffic of the lines and course of commerce.

In connection with this subject, it is a public duty to place upon record the great and persistent efforts made by Lord Brassey since his return to England to secure the just recognition of Port Darwin by the Imperial Government.

Unhappily Lord Brassey's visit here was made under most sorrowful as well as most unfavorable circumstances. The *Sunbeam* arrived on September 6th with Lady Brassey seriously ill with malarial fever, contracted on the Queensland coast. Such services as we could render by the supply of fruits, vegetables, ice, &c., were all we could do for the invalid lady and the rest of our distinguished visitors. Dr. Wood was called into consultation, and thought Lady Brassey's state of health presented very serious symptoms. As is now well known with deep regret Lady Brassey expired within a week after leaving Port Darwin. In addition to the calamity of Lady Brassey's illness smallpox had manifested itself in Palmerston, and Port Darwin was proclaimed an infected port.

Lord Brassey did not think it expedient that he or any of the visitors on the *Sunbeam* should land. I was permitted, however, to have a long conversation with Lord Brassey from my gig, and such information as under these circumstances could be furnished was supplied.

It was manifest Lord Brassey was impressed with the harbor and the growing importance of the place. The able letters which he has written to the *Times*, and the unanswerable arguments he has employed, will no doubt secure for Port Darwin the position of an Imperial coaling station and arsenal.

Much of what is said above applies to and makes for the creating of Port Darwin as an *entrepôt* for commerce. The productions and commodities of the north coast of Australia, and of the islands which lie to the north, including at least the western portion of New Guinea, will ultimately come to Port Darwin for shipment to European markets. At present the conservative regulations of the Netherlands India Government require that all native products shall be dealt with exclusively by the Government. Singapore also, as a free port, with a great many competing lines of steamers, and with the cheapest labor for handling and transshipping goods, holds a very large trade. So far as Port Darwin is concerned, the assertion of the geographical position, and the grasp of the trade of the islands in the Banda, Molucca, and Sooloo seas, must be by growth and expansion, and cannot be snatched out of the hands at present controlling it. It is an object which should be steadily kept in view by the Legislature, and the collection of all available information would greatly assist both legislation and commerce.

#### THE ABORIGINES.

In the Appendix will be found the report of the Reverend Father McKillop, S.J., the Acting Superintendent of the Rapid Creek and Daly River Jesuit mission station. So far as Rapid Creek is concerned, the report is a confession of failure; at Daly River, in the early period of novelty, the report is hopeful. The Larrakeeyahs, the Port Darwin tribe, appear to be utterly unaffected by the efforts for their evangelization by self-denying fathers and brothers. The missionaries themselves say that this tribe has been too long and too closely associated with the white settlers to give any hope of being affected by Christianizing influence. In fact, it is said on excellent authority that recently a corroboree of the old men, who really hold the position of chiefs, in which the attitude of the Larrakeeyahs to Christianity was discussed. Whatever may have been the aspects in which it was viewed, whether it was too much work and too little tobacco, too much morality and too few shillings, or not, the decision arrived at was—"Religion along Rapid Creek no good." I fear this may be said to apply to nearly all other forms of the faith. For months none of the Larrakeeyahs have gone near the mission station. The Alligator tribe, who make periodical visits to Palmerston, and who for a time made a camping ground at Rapid Creek, now avoid it. Those who know the Daly River tribes best are not sanguine of permanent results being achieved there. Probably if among all the tribes the children could be withdrawn altogether from the parents and from wandering and camp life, they might be cured of their inveterate nomadism, and might also be trained to be a very successful and useful element of population in the Territory. The old men and women will hear of no change which would lessen their authority or take away any of their privileges in the tribe. The young men and women follow in the footsteps of the old, well knowing that in due course they will come into the inheritance, when the choice of the lubras, the delicacies in food, and the traditional exercise of authority will be theirs. The only hope is the withdrawal of the young children; but their parents will not part with them.

Meanwhile, the apparently inevitable results of a white race settling down alongside a black race are going on. The blacks learn the vices, and take the diseases of the whites. The natives' passion for liquor is uncontrollable, and their intoxication is a form of madness. Partial and intermitted clothing increases pulmonary complaints; and semi-civilised and barbarous habits produce other diseases. The influences at work are withering away the tribes close by settlements.

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In the inside country, where the pastoralists are forming stations, the tribes are hostile and treacherous, and murderous. No doubt, in some cases, the white men are vicious and cruel; but, in almost all cases, those who have had the longest experience of the natives testify that they cannot be trusted; that they resent the intrusion of the white men into their country, and whenever they can they lay an ambush and fling a spear. The intelligence which is constantly coming in is of cattle spearing, sullen animosity, and wherever safe opportunity occurs, white men are murdered and eaten. There are, of course, exceptions, but they emphasize the rule. In prior reports, I have called attention to this subject; but I am not able to offer much in the way of suggestion as to remedial measures. Reserves, no doubt, should be dedicated. These reserves should include permanent waters and river frontages. The rights of the aborigines to as much of the land—the best of the land—as may be necessary for their sustenance and tribal life are indisputable. But these rights, as a matter of fact, are treated rather in a poetic than a practical sense. It is true, in the pastoral lease under the Northern Territory Crown Lands Consolidation Act, 1882, there is a clause which reads:—“Reserving nevertheless, and excepting out of the said demise to Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, for and on account of the present aboriginal inhabitants of the province and their descendants during the continuance of this demise, full and free right, ingress, egress, and regress into, upon, and over the said waste lands of the Crown hereby demised, and on and to the springs and surface water thereon, and to make and erect such wurlies and other dwellings as the aboriginal natives have been accustomed to make, and to take and use for food birds and animals *feræ naturæ* in such manner as they would have been entitled to had not this demise been made.”

But what is the usual course of procedure? A capitalist or a syndicate applies for or buys at auction the leases for a certain number of hundreds or thousands of square miles of country, carefully following the permanent watercourses, and including the permanent lagoons and waterholes. The aborigines who have the vested interests of hoary antiquity are only considered by the State to the extent of the above-recited clause in the pastoral lease. Afterwards the squatter or his manager comes on to the country with his overland herds, and usually tries to cultivate friendly relations with the natives. How often these kindly-meant attempts are frustrated is only known by those who have attempted them. In nearly all cases the early results of the white man's intrusion is a permanent feud between the blacks and whites. The blacks frighten and spear the cattle, and hold themselves in readiness to attack boundary-rider and stockman, or to make a raid upon out-stations or the storeroom. The whites look well to their Winchesters and revolvers, and usually proceed on the principle of being on the safe side. It is an affectation of ignorance to pretend not to know that this is the condition of things throughout the “back blocks” and the “new country” of Australia. The problem is plain enough, but its solution is not. If the inland tribes could only be induced to emigrate to Melville Island that would be a solution. I can only recommend (1) that an aboriginal reserve should be laid out in each tribe's country of sufficient size, with sufficient water, for the tribe's use. (2) That tribes should be warned, where the country is occupied by pastoralists, that they must keep to their reserves; when they wish to visit other tribes they must give notice of their intention, and proceed by a route and on a date to be fixed. (3) That where practicable labor engagements with blacks should be made in writing, full details of nature of service, wages, and rations to be given, before the Protector of Aborigines or a Justice of the Peace. (4) That, except in the case of those in European employment, the carrying of firearms should be absolutely prohibited. (5) That an Act should be passed for the better government of aborigines, and for taking the evidence, and for the punishment of their crimes.

#### THE LIGHTING OF THE APPROACHES TO PORT DARWIN.

The time has come when the lighting of the approaches to the harbour should be undertaken. Any voyager coming from the eastward, and marking the careful and scientific manner in which the Queensland coast is lighted, and then going westward to Java and observing the complete lighthouse system of that coast, is astonished at the utter want of lights to Port Darwin. The full reports which have been forwarded from Captains Marsh (harbor-master), Carrington (s.s. *Palmerston*), Maclear, R.N. (H.M.S. *Flying Fish*), Hoskyn, R.N. (H.M.S. *Myrmidon*), and captains of steamships in the Australian and China trade, have been considered by the Marine Board, and that body recommended lights should be erected at Capes Foureroy and Don, and points Emery and Charles. No doubt, for safe navigation night and day, all these are required; but there is a consensus opinion from shipmasters that the most pressing want is a first-class light on Point Emery. This would be visible for nearly thirty miles, and, if built, would be the best commencement of the lighting system for the Northern Territory. The other lighthouses could be erected as the trade of the port increased, although lights at Capes Foureroy and Don are much needed. Lights are now regarded as an essential of civilized nations, and the reduction in the insurance rates, and the saving of time which they insure, make the payment of light dues an economy instead of an expenditure. The tonnage of vessels entered inward for Port Darwin for 1887 was 115,416 tons; entered outwards 118,140 tons. The total value of exports was £94,647; of imports, £110,047. As lighthouses are really reproductive works, and of permanent value, the first cost is fairly chargeable to Loan Account.

I hope one result of the visit of the Hon. the Minister to the Northern Territory, will be the speedy commencement of the Point Emery lighthouse.

#### THE PALMERSTON AND PINE CREEK RAILWAY AND THE TRANS-AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY.

The Palmerston and Pine Creek Railway was really commenced in August, 1887; but the work was only slowly prosecuted, apparently under pressure, in consequence of the presence in Port Darwin of a large number of returned diggers from the Kimberley goldfield.

This sudden and large influx of a white population embarrassed both the Government and the contractors, as the necessary plant was not here so that the men might be profitably employed.

The result of such employment was that the great majority of Europeans left the Territory as soon as they had earned a sufficient sum to pay their passages. Of course, during the wet season, the kind of work that could be undertaken was limited.

The arrival of Mr. C. G. Millar in April was the signal for an enterprising recommencement. Since then the work has been prosecuted with great vigour, and day by day the platelayers have been pushing on the line.

Mr.

## HEALTH OFFICER.

Palmerston, January 1st, 1888.

Sir—As Government medical officer in charge of the hospital, gaol, port, &c., during the absence of Dr. P. M. Wood, I have the honor to submit to you a report of the several departments under my charge, also an account of the health of the town, for the year 1887.

*Hospital.*—Nine patients were resident in the hospital on the 1st of January, 1887.

During the year 1887, 130 patients were admitted, 120 were discharged, 7 remained resident on the 1st of January, 1888, and 12 died; 89 were cured, 30 greatly relieved, 1 discharged incurable.

The nationality of those admitted was—Europeans, 109; Chinese, 16; Cingalese, 11; aboriginals 3.

The average duration of residence of each patient has been twenty-six days.

The causes of death were—Europeans (7), 2 pthisis, 1 carcinoma of pelvis, 1 pernicious anæmid, 2 accidents, 1 dysentery; Chinese (3), 1 tuberculosis of lung, 1 fractured skull, 1 necrosis of skull and abscess of brain; aboriginals (2), 1 puerperal fever, 1 (infant of the above) marasmus.

Surgical cases admitted (68)—

Diseases of eye .....	5
“ of skin .....	5
“ of urino genital organs .....	5
“ venereal .....	9
“ various .....	16
Accidents .....	28
Total .....	68

Medical cases admitted (71)—

Malarial fever .....	23
Dysentery .....	9
Scurvy .....	5
Lung.. ..	7
Morbus cordis .....	1
Various .....	26
Total .....	71

Major operations were—3 trephining, 2 plastic, 2 removal of diseased cartilage, 1 amputation of leg, 1 abdominal section, 1 sequestrotomy, 1 removal of loose cartilage from knee joint.

I would respectfully beg to point out that there is much need of a servant in the hospital. The cook has at times more to do than he can manage, and all other attendants have their time fully occupied. Now that the kitchen will be removed further from the well, additional work will result from carrying water. A proper servant to wash linen, chop wood, carry water, and keep the outside grounds tidy, would be a great boon. Much might be done at a small expense by putting a pump and tank to the well, and laying on water pipes to the kitchen, washhouse, bathrooms, &c.

The buildings which are to be erected will very greatly improve the usefulness and health of the hospital, but it is to be regretted that a female ward could not be built away from the present block of wards. Taking out a small ward from the present building will seriously interfere with the comfort, usefulness, and working of the male wards, and will not make a satisfactory female ward.

*Gaol.*—The health of the prisoners during the year has been good, owing no doubt to the much less crowded state of the gaol than in the previous years. No death has occurred. The number of prisoners requiring medical attendance was eighty-seven. The want of the infirmary is much felt, this building is completed, but as yet there are no necessary infirmary appliances provided. I would respectfully call attention to the fact that there is nowhere any provisions for lunatics. Mr. J. H. Servante, Customs officer, had to be sent to the gaol and detained in a cell for criminal prisoners, which was very undesirable.

*Town Health.*—The town has not been so satisfactory as last year. In the early part of the year nine cases of small-pox broke out (one European and eight Chinese). These were all among Chinese who had recently arrived in the colony, the European having caught small-pox from examining the clothing of Chinese arriving here. Great difficulty was experienced in dealing with this case as there is no place to isolate Europeans suffering from contagious disease. Towards the end of the year there was a serious increase of dysentery. Climatic diseases were generally very prevalent.

A good deal has been done to improve the sanitary condition of the town by destroying old wooden sheds used as dwelling-places by the Chinese. All structures built of bark should be destroyed. Over-crowding is still very bad. During the year fifty-three deaths were registered (Europeans, thirty-five; Chinese, twenty-one; Cingalese, one. Thirteen of these deaths were occasioned by violence.

*Aborigines.*—General health has been fairly good, though several have died from dysentery. Mr. E. O. Robinson again reports several deaths from malarial fever. Three aborigines have been committed to gaol on a charge of housebreaking.

*Ports.*—The influx of Chinese has been unprecedentedly large in the early part of the year. One ship arrived with small-pox among her passengers. It is difficult to deal with steamers liable to quarantine, for the proclaimed quarantine ground is so situated between rocks that it is not safe to order large ships to the ground, and further the ground blocks the whole waterway to Southport. A proper hulk for infected persons is still urgently needed.

I have, &c.,

HENRY HOWE BOVILL.

The Honorable J. L. Parsons, Government Resident.

## ABORIGINES.

Rapid Creek, January 20th, 1888.

Sir—I was not aware that a “ Report with detailed information ” was a *conditio sine qua non* to the consideration even of my request for the usual Government grant to our native mission. A report would have been sent in as soon as I clearly understood what was the ordinary course in this matter; but I was certainly under the impression that we might have put in our claim for the money on any day after the first day of July, and was careful some months ago to make inquiries in Palmerston as to whether any further formality was necessary. Of course we recognise the right of the Government to know that the money received from it is expended to the end for which it was given, and I trust the report which I now have the honour to submit will more than satisfy you on this head.

The substance of my report may be put into one short paragraph: Hard and constant toil on the part of our fathers and brothers, both here and on the Daly River. Here at Rapid Creek failure for the present, with very poor hope of future; on the Daly ever-increasing success. The proximity of Palmerston is the main factor in the failure; the complete absence of the white man on the left bank of the Daly River the greatest blessing to our mission.

Feeling some months ago that sooner or later things would take this turn, we determined to push on the interests of the Daly River station rather than those of Rapid Creek. Limited means allowed no more.

For more than four months—from January to May—we had here, at Rapid Creek, from thirty to forty blacks. They received instruction in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity in their own language, the children daily attended school, where they were taught the rudiments of English and to read their own language, and all were fed and clothed while they remained with us. In May came the big fight with the Alligator tribe, and our blacks, fearing reprisals from the Alligators, made off. They have not, as a body, returned. In June they came in fair numbers, but, having received their blankets, cleared off again. From time to time they have turned up in smaller numbers, but never remained long. Some of the children, however, have stayed with us for weeks at a time.

With the exception of the children, the blacks are always, while with us, supplied with tobacco, as well as with food and clothing.

During the small-pox scare they wished to return, but in the interest of Palmerston, as well as the blacks themselves, we succeeded in keeping them at a distance—some for a time at the Casuarinas, but most of them far away.

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Many of them (the men are all Woolnas) are now hanging about Palmerston. They are afraid, they say, to come here—afraid of the Alligators. This, I do not believe. They prefer Palmerston, because most of them are thoroughly corrupted. Our only hope all along was in the children—at least our only well-founded hope. Sir, it is hard to struggle against the evil influences of the white man's presence. With the limited means at our disposal, and teaching as we must the restraints of Christianity, the fight is an up-hill one against lust and grog and opium. I see only one hope for Rapid Creek, and this will be but a poor one unless some little pressure be put on the blacks by the authorities. I mean the assured presence of the children here. Things would then be done on a much larger scale. We should be assisted by nuns in our work, our poor blacks might learn that they, too, could earn an honest livelihood; and the loafing, which now disgraces the streets of Palmerston, would, I believe, in a great measure cease.

More than two years ago a Government official sent us a Queensland black, *minus* a leg, taken off in the hospital. Of course, he is very helpless. We have to clothe and feed him, and his fare is the same as our own; he has besides a room, which, when the children are here, he shares with the Christian boys. But from Government we have never received anything on his account—not even the long-promised leg. It is only fair to say that before his departure Dr. Wood took the man's measure. But the same was done two years ago, and nothing came of it. The poor fellow has learned to read, or his life would be a dreary one. He is quite civilized, and a thorough unostentatious practitioner of his religion.

One man died here last year. He was not one of our regular blacks—indeed was almost unknown to us. He died, I believe, of starvation. We did what we could for him, but it was too late.

During the past year the Daly River station was without blacks on three occasions only. The two first would give a total of about a fortnight, the third was for two or three weeks, when our own people were almost on starvation diet. From July four families were maintained—a total of sixteen souls. When early in November I visited the Daly, besides the women and children, there were eight blacks on the station. There are at least as many there now—probably more—and from that time there has been a constant attendance of twenty children at the school. On the Daly we can have as many blacks as we want.

We are forced to limit the number, as we have not the means to give to more the rations they well deserve. They work splendidly, and are happy and contented. I have never yet pinned my faith to a blackfellow, but should things continue on the Daly as they have been, I shall soon shake off my lingering prejudices, and believe that the uncontaminated (by the white man) Australian savage is capable of the better feelings of our nature. We have to do at present with the Mulluch-Mulluchs. The Woolwongas on the right bank of the river, are, I fear, hopelessly enlightened by the superior race, and that they and the Agaquillas, their friends, are the sworn enemies of the white man. On the other hand, the Cherites and Wagites are friendly to our tribe. The Mulluch-Mulluchs do not speak well of the Mi-Mulluchs, a tribe more to the west. This, I think, is to keep us from going to them. But, of course, once firmly established on the Serpentine, we would endeavour to push westward.

While the blacks were here at Rapid Creek they did fair work, and hard work has been going on with a view to their return, during their absence. We had hoped to have a large crop of rice this year, and a fair show of maize. We have, indeed, more rice in this season than in any previous year, but, beyond the work of clearing the ground, we have not done as much as we intended. The prolonged absence of the blacks is not the only reason of this. We deemed it prudent, and for the future good of these missions, to weaken our numbers here that we might strengthen the Daly River staff. In spite of their seemingly excellent dispositions we do not fully trust the Mulluch-Mulluchs—I feel half ashamed to own it—but prudence requires and the past fully warrants the precaution. I have spoken of rice and maize, but, of course, other things are planted also. Rice would seem to promise the best returns.

In November I took a good assortment of plants and seed to the Daly River. No effort will be spared to make that station as much as can be self-supporting. At present we are building there. For twelve months the habitation of our fathers and brothers was one small room, not too well sheltered from the weather.

The present station near the river, besides being a centre for the blacks around, will afford a means of communication with Palmerston, and be a repository for stores. Of course, we look forward to the Serpentine Lake as our chief centre in those parts. With the Daly River Reserve stocked, as we hope soon to stock it, and with the rice and other products which I believe we can grow in great quantities by the Serpentine, we trust in the near future to go a long way towards supporting the whole mission.

Some months ago we tried goats at the Daly. They are thriving wonderfully. They are at present about thirty. The lubras do the goat herding.

The Serpentine station will be started as soon as the men and money are forthcoming. To procure the one and the other is the object of the Rev. F. Strele's mission to America and Europe.

Quite lately we hear that the mining industry will greatly develop at the Daly. For the good of the Territory I trust it will—for the sake of the blacks, I had almost said, I would hope for failure. However, nothing is expected from our side of the river, and, provided we get a fair start, it may not matter much. In such case the success of the mines *might* be a good thing for the mission, as it would mean a market near at hand. To be honest, I must say I fear it will mean much more.

In conclusion, Sir, we thank you exceedingly for the favor shown some months ago, when you fixed, as we desired, the boundaries of the Daly River Reserve. In the difficult task we have undertaken—it might well be called a forlorn hope—it would be unfair to expect great results in a short time, and unwise to despond because of some failure. If self-sacrifice and hard work go for anything, we trust that, with the blessing of Heaven, we shall yet prove that much—very much—may be done for the temporal and spiritual welfare of those for whom we labor.

The Hon. J. L. Parsons, Palmerston.

I have, &c.,

D. MACKILLOP, S.J., Vice-Superior.

## METEOROLOGICAL.

Meteorological observations recorded at Telegraph Station, Port Darwin, Northern Territory, for Year ended December 31st, 1887.

Month.	Mean Maximum Temperature in shade.	Mean Minimum Temperature in Shade.	Mean Maximum Temperature in Sun.	Rain during Month.
1887.				
January.....	91·8	76·7	120·5	Inches. 9·975
February.....	91·1	76·5	119·0	20·310
March.....	92·6	76·8	221·0	3·845
April.....	88·8	74·4	115·9	10·030
May.....	88·7	72·4	114·9	0·673
June.....	86·2	66·5	112·4	nil
July.....	84·3	62·7	110·6	nil
August.....	89·1	66·8	116·0	nil
September.....	91·2	72·0	119·2	nil
October.....	94·6	75·5	122·2	4·590
November.....	94·4	76·1	121·9	7·300
December.....	93·6	77·9	123·5	10·285
Total.....	1086·4	874·3	1417·1	67·008
Mean for one year.....	90·5	72·9	118·1	—

Post Office and Telegraph Department, Port Darwin.

J. A. G. LITTLE, Senior and Inspecting Officer.

Return