

B. R.

South  Australia.

REPORT

OF THE

PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 1901.



Adelaide :

C. E. BRISTOW, GOVERNMENT PRINTER, NORTH TERRACE.

1901.

REPORT.

The following report with reference to the aborigines for the year ended June 30th, 1901, is respectfully submitted for the information of the Hon. Minister of Education, &c.:—

Number of aborigines in the settled districts of South Australia, as per census returns of 1901, exclusive of the Northern Territory—

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Adults.—Blacks—Males | 1,556 |
| “ “ Females | 1,497 |
| Children.—Blacks—Males | 190 |
| “ “ Females | 143 |
| Total blacks | — 3,386 |
| Adults.—Half-castes—Males | 117 |
| “ “ Females | 105 |
| Children.—Half-castes—Males | 144 |
| “ “ Females | 136 |
| Total half-castes | — 502 |
| Total aboriginal population | <u>3,888</u> |

According to the census of 1891 the total number of natives in the State was 3,134, and this was reduced during the ten years to 2,824, as the births (369) and deaths (679) recorded during this period give an excess of 310 deaths. The census of 1901 therefore shows an increase of 1,064 aborigines, which cannot be regarded as a natural one, being probably caused by the influx of natives from the interior of the continent, owing doubtless to the severity of the droughts experienced during the past few years.

The depôts (forty-eight in number), chiefly in charge of the police, are placed in the localities most frequented by the natives and afford them facilities for obtaining food, clothing, and other comforts. Medical attendance has also been provided in all necessary cases; 281 were treated at a cost of £157 14s. 11d.

Twenty-nine aborigines were admitted to the Adelaide Hospital during the year and received every care and attention from the medical officers and staff.

Dr. Engelhart, of Kingston, where about forty aborigines are usually located, reports that their health and well-being have been satisfactory. They have found by experience that it is far better for their comfort to engage in work instead of idling away their time. In this direction the wattle-bark industry and rabbit-catching have offered ample opportunities to earn money, and with it to live more comfortably. Both men and women dress better and are cleaner than usual, and some of the half caste girls have gone into service at Kingston and give satisfaction so far.

The following table shows the number, &c., of aborigines at the mission stations:—

| Name of Station. | Total Number of Aborigines. | Number of Children. | Births. | | Deaths. | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| | | | Blacks. | Half-castes. | Blacks. | Half-castes. |
| Point McLeay... | 227 | 112 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 3 |
| Point Pierce.... | 112 | 41 | — | 5 | 1 | — |
| Kopperamanna.. | 166 | 21 | 3 | — | 8 | — |
| Totals..... | 505 | 174 | 5 | 12 | 12 | 3 |

The number of half-castes at Point McLeay and Point Pierce cannot be taken as an indication of immorality among the inmates, as during the past thirty to forty years both full-bloods and half-castes are regularly married.

Some of the half-caste and quadroon girls have been placed in domestic service about Adelaide, and they are spoken favorably of by the ladies who employ them.

Attention has been called to the number of half-castes about the Far North and West, and their condition, especially that of the girls, is not a satisfactory one. "Neglected" European children can be dealt with under the provisions of the State Children Act, but a recent legal decision was to the effect that this Act does not apply to aborigines. Some amendment of the law in this respect would seem desirable whereby destitute neglected aboriginal children could be committed to a mission station till they attain the age of 18 years, to apply to orphans and children whose parents are shown to be unable or unwilling to care properly for them.

The financial returns from the mission stations for 1900 show—

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|--------|----|----|
| Total voluntary contributions received | 480 | 3 | 3 |
| Total amount proceeds of produce raised | 4,489 | 14 | 0 |
| Total amount wages paid to aborigines | 1,554 | 3 | 1 |
| Total estimated value of all buildings, stock, and produce raised on stations | 22,081 | 5 | 4 |

The offences for which aborigines were convicted were—

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| Drunkenness | 35 |
| Larceny | 5 |
| Disturbing the peace | 1 |
| False pretences | 1 |
| Breach of Railways Act | 2 |
| Lunacy | 2 |
| Total | 46 |

and eight convictions were obtained for supplying aborigines with intoxicating liquors.

Eighteen aborigines have been given blocks of land under leases and permits. Recent returns show that some of them are making fair progress towards earning their own living. Three of them are worthy of special mention for having made the following improvements without assistance from the Government:—Muckray, Wellington—Five-roomed house (stone, wood, and iron), land all fenced with six wires, plough, spring dray and harness, buggy, harrows, cream separator, four horses, fifteen cows, four calves, eighteen sheep, and three pigs. McHughes, Wellington—House of three rooms (stone and iron), land all fenced with six wires, plough, dray and harness, harrows, two boats, two horses, five cows, and 114 sheep. Napoleon Bonaparte, hundred of Baker—House of two rooms (stone and thatch), shed, plough and harrows, reaper, winnowing machine, dray and two sets of harness, two horses, one cow, 1 ton of hay, and two acres of barley.

The following comparative statement shows the number of aborigines and the cost of the departments in the States named:—

| | South Australia. | Victoria. | N.S. Wales. |
|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Number of aborigines.. | 3,888 .. | 433 .. | 6,891 |
| Annual vote | £4,412 .. | £4,846 .. | £16,591 |
| Cost per head | £1 2s. 8d. .. | £11 3s. 10d. .. | £2 8s. 1d. |

The following statement shows the expenditure of the "Aborigines' vote" for the year ended June 30th, 1901:—

| | £ | s. | d. |
|--|--------|----|----|
| Rations issued at the various depôts | 1,200 | 7 | 1 |
| Clothing, blankets, &c. | 761 | 0 | 3 |
| Canoes, boats | 46 | 11 | 9 |
| Medical attendance and medicines | 157 | 14 | 11 |
| Transport charges sundry depôts | 580 | 19 | 3 |
| Burial charges, destitute aborigines | 34 | 3 | 3 |
| Firewood (old, infirm, and sick) | 12 | 1 | 7 |
| Sundry rations prisoners and travellers | 32 | 10 | 8 |
| Annual contribution, Adelaide Hospital | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| Petty, travelling, and sundry expenses | 39 | 15 | 11 |
| Services (clerical) in office of Sub-Protector, Port Augusta | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| Telephone exchange | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Receiving, storing, and issuing stores at G.P.O. stores | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Printing and stationery | 9 | 16 | 6 |
| Fishing tackle, axes, tinware, &c. | 73 | 18 | 6 |
| O.S. telegrams | 15 | 14 | 11 |
| O.S. postage stamps | 24 | 11 | 0 |
| Grants-in-aid of Aborigines' Friends' Association, Point McLeay | 1,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Point Pierce Mission for cottages | 150 | 0 | 0 |
| Salaries, Protector and Sub-Protector, Far North | 262 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | £4,453 | 15 | 7 |

I append the report of the Sub-Protector for the Far North.

E. L. HAMILTON, P.A.

Aborigines' Office, Adelaide, July 31st, 1901.

REPORT OF THE SUB-PROTECTOR FOR THE
FAR NORTH.

Mr. Field, Port Augusta, Sub-Protector for the Far North, reports as follows :—

In submitting my report on the conduct and condition of the aborigines in the Far North during the year ended June 30th, 1901, I have the honor to inform you that their health and general conduct has been good. I have not been able to visit some of the depôts, as they are so far apart; but those I have visited I have found satisfactory. The monthly returns have come in fairly regular, and for those that have been delayed an explanation has been given. I have every reason to believe that the stores supplied by the Government have been carefully distributed by the issuers. The stores from the Pines Depôt are being transferred to Coondambo, where the natives are more in need of relief.

The following are abstracts from the reports received from some of the outlying depôts :—

ANNA CREEK.

About eighty-five able-bodied adults. Seventeen old and infirm, fifteen children. They are quiet and well behaved; twenty are constantly employed and found useful as boundary riders, &c. Two died from a sort of scurvy brought on by the protracted drought, and two from senile decay.

MONTA COLLINA.

About twenty aborigines. Twelve of these old and infirm, three children, and three working on the station. One death from excessive heat, and four from old age; no births. Conduct good.

MULLOORINA.

Average number thirty. Owing to protracted drought there is neither game nor food of any kind for them, and they have been dependent on the Government rations. A few have gone north, where rain has fallen. No birth or deaths. Conduct good.

OODNADATTA.

The average number at this depôt during the year was 113. The issuer, M.C. Ireland, states that on the whole their general conduct has been good, and they have been well cared and provided for.

Two males were committed for larceny, one for disturbing the peace. Three males and one female were convicted for larceny.

As far as can be ascertained there have been four births and seven deaths; but these numbers are not reliable, as the natives are not given to disclosing these facts.

The number of aborigines between Strangways Springs and Charlotte Waters is about 500.

I would suggest that some efforts be made to protect and provide for the large number of female half-castes who are found in the blacks' camps both in this and the surrounding districts; in some cases they object to leave their tribe, and in others the mothers of the girls will not consent to give them up.

BLINMAN.

About thirty in neighborhood. Seventeen supplied with rations. They have not had much employment owing to the bad seasons. No births; and seven deaths, chiefly from pneumonia.

STUART'S CREEK.

About twenty-five aborigines. Owing to the drought last year was compelled to issue full quantity of rations; but since the February rains they have been able to obtain most of their natural food. Two births and one death.

CHARLOTTE WATERS.

Average number of natives, fifty. Births, one; deaths, two. Health and conduct good.

MOUNT LYNDHURST.

Only a few at the station now; most of them employed at the mines. No births or deaths known.

INNAMINCKA.

The issuer, M.C. Dailey, states—

At present rations are supplied to about twenty aborigines, chiefly old and infirm. The younger of both sexes finding employment on the surrounding stations, where they are well cared for and in receipt of wages, whereby they greatly assist their aged parents by purchasing supplies from the stores, in addition to that provided by the Government.

Mr. Walker, of Innamincka Station, employs about eight throughout the year. He is unremitting in his kind attention to them and the old natives at his depôt, supplying them with medicines in cases of sickness.

The last four or five years have been very severe on the natives in this part owing to the absence of rain. Nardoo and other plants which form their natural food have been scanty, and as there has been no Queensland flood in the Cooper since the middle of 1898, fish and game has been exceptionally scarce.

As far as can be ascertained the births were one and deaths seven; and general conduct good, as no offences of any kind were brought under notice during the year.

WEST COAST.

In April last I proceeded to Port Lincoln to inspect the stations on the West Coast, and at the same time I inspected the depôts and other aborigines' camps.

PORT LINCOLN.

Only one native, but there are a few more in the district who come in occasionally for rations. One birth, one death, and one convicted for drunkenness.

ELLISTON.

No natives at depôt. Some are employed by settlers, and occasionally call for rations.

STREAKY BAY.

No natives at depôt, but come in sometimes for relief. General conduct and health good.

At Mr. McKenzie's farm, at Denial Bay, I found about twenty aborigines and several children; all who were fit for work were employed on the farm and rabbiting. A few old and infirm were among them; they all looked well fed and contented.

At Mr. Murray's, Penong, a few natives were employed at various kinds of work, and seemed to give general satisfaction.

FOWLER'S BAY.

There were sixteen able-bodied natives, five old and infirm, and five children; and the issuer, M.C. Catchlove, informed me there were many more at various places in the district and along the coast working for farmers and others, and their general conduct was satisfactory. I examined the stores at these depôts and found them correct.

OFFENCES.

The following aborigines were convicted during the year:—One, larceny, three months' imprisonment; two, larceny, one month imprisonment; four, drunkenness; one, disturbing peace; one, obstructing railway, three months' imprisonment; one, breach of Railways Act, one month imprisonment; one, false pretences, three months' imprisonment; two, lunacy, sent to the asylum.

The following aborigines were admitted as in-door patients to the Port Augusta Hospital:—Mick (disease), cured; Romea (disease, necrosis of tibia), improved; Jimmy (disease, epithulma of leg), not cured; Brooks, Edwd. (disease, hydatids of brain), died. As out-door patients—Males, fourteen; females, five.

I would beg to state that Drs Cheney and Riddle and the hospital staff deserve great praise for their extreme kindness and attention to the aborigines.

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