

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

GOVERNMENT RESIDENT'S REPORT FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, 1898.

GOVERNMENT RESIDENT'S REPORT on the NORTHERN TERRITORY for the YEAR 1898.

Northern Territory of South Australia : Office of the Government Resident,
Palmerston, April 28th, 1899.

Sir—I have the honor to place before you my report on the affairs of the Northern Territory for the year ending December 31st, 1898.

PASTORAL.

The following table sets forth the transactions which have taken place, and the revenue received, under this heading during the years 1897 and 1898 :—

	1897.	1898.	Increase.	Decrease.
	Square Miles.	Square Miles.	Square Miles.	Square Miles.
Area held under lease	180,000	140,563	—	39,437
Area declared stocked	27,500	28,000	500	—
Area forfeited and surrendered	22,777	46,443	23,666	—
Area applied for	6,660	7,006	346	—
Rents received	£7,800	£7,594 16s. 11d.	—	£205 4s. 1d.

In my report for the year 1897 I ventured to predict that a further large area of our pastoral lands would be forfeited and surrendered during this year ; and such, unfortunately, has been the case. These lands were not taken up for pastoral settlement, but for speculative purposes and in order to acquire mineral concessions under the Act of 1896.

These concessions were granted with the object of inducing the holders to expend moneys in prospecting operations or other works of development on the blocks of land leased, but I regret to say that, except in two instances, nothing has been done by the lessees in this direction.

The reports as to the condition, increase, and health of the stock on the various runs are, on the whole, very satisfactory. The losses which have taken place with travelling stock, whether from "tick fever" or other causes, have been trifling indeed, and it would appear that the tick pest has entirely disappeared from the runs situate on the table-lands.

Ten thousand five hundred and seventy-seven head of horned cattle, declared value of £34,341, have been exported during the year. The following are the particulars :—

	From what Run.	Destination.	Number.	Rate per Head.	Total Value.	Remarks.
				£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Port Darwin	Various	Singapore	165	4 0 0	660 0 0	Last shipment made Names of runs not given. Evidently store cattle
Charlotte Waters	—	South Australia	5,884	2 12 0	15,328 0 0	
Camooweal	Wonardo	Adelaide	906	4 10 0	4,077 0 0	Probably fats
"	Brunette Downs	"	1,087	4 10 0	4,891 0 0	
"	Soudan	"	500	4 10 0	2,250 0 0	
"	Lake Nash	"	560	4 10 0	2,520 0 0	
"	Wollogorang	Queensland	700	2 10 0	1,750 0 0	These I think are for boiling down
"	Avon Downs	Adelaide	360	4 10 0	1,620 0 0	
"	Austral Downs	"	415	3 0 0	1,245 0 0	Probably fats
			10,577		£34,341 0 0	

I have no information as to the actual price realised by the sale of these cattle when they arrived at their respective destinations, but, considering the distance they would be compelled to travel, and the consequent expense and loss entailed, I should judge that the prices obtained could not be very satisfactory to the producers.

localities, and this I believe may be attributed to the workings having reached water level, and the lack of sufficient capital to properly develop them.

The report of the Chief Warden bearing on the Howley and Eureka mines is very cheering, and it would appear from the satisfactory developments to which he refers that substantial results may be fully anticipated from these mines during the year we have entered upon.

With reference to the Eureka gold mine, Mr. Rosewarne writes me that with the new machinery at present erected on the mine he hopes to put through 2,000 tons of ore per month, and that the following machinery is *en route* and ordered for the development of the property:—One slimes treatment plant, 1,000 tons capacity; one second treatment of cyanide, 800 tons capacity; and one pyritic ore plant, 800 tons capacity.

So much attention, particularly in England, has been drawn to the mines owned by the Northern Territories Goldfields Company that the result of their operations cannot fail to have an important bearing on the future of gold mining in the Northern Territory.

If it can be proved that these mines can be made dividend-paying concerns there is no question that the much-needed capital will flow into the Northern Territory, and the success of this important industry, upon which, in my opinion, its progress so much depends, will be assured. The exaggerated reports, however, of the value of the property, which are in no way warranted by the developments, have been circulated by some of those interested, with the view, no doubt, of forcing up the value of the shares, cannot in the long run but prove injurious to the mines referred to and to mining generally in the Territory.

It is idle to ignore that the rich returns which have appeared from time to time as the result of the crushing of ore raised by the Chinese cannot be taken as a fair indication of the yields which may be anticipated from the mines when systematically and properly developed. The mode hitherto adopted by the Chinese has been to work the richest parts of the reefs, leaving the great bulk of the ore untouched.

I believe that the successful development of many of our gold mines will depend upon their being worked on a large scale. Instead of a battery mill with ten or twenty stamps there should be 100 stamps to deal with the large bodies of ore which undoubtedly exist, and the latest and best gold-saving machinery suitable for treating the refractory ores which are present in large quantities below water level. This means, no doubt, embarking a large amount of capital in the enterprise—not on paper, as is the case, I regret to say, with most of the companies, formed ostensibly for the purpose of working mines in the Territory, but actually available for *bonâ-fide* developments. With cheap and reliable labor, abundant water and fuel, there are not many localities, so far as I have been able to ascertain, where they can be worked so inexpensively as in the Northern Territory.

I am glad to point to a substantial increase in the revenue received from miners' rights, which is over a hundred pounds more than that of the previous year. The proceedings instituted against defaulting Chinese have, as I anticipated, brought about the desired result, and I believe if persisted in will in most cases ensure payment of the fees by those who have the means to do so.

AGRICULTURE.

I have nothing to record under this heading. The report of the Curator of the Botanical Garden is appended hereto.

THE ABORIGINES.

It is certainly surprising that though, in the early days of the history of the colony, the office of the "Protector of Aborigines" was created, no legislation has been passed enabling the officer holding that appointment to deal with the various matters which of necessity arise in connection with the natives and their relations with other races.

The only Act in the Statute Book of value in this connection is that providing for the manner of taking the evidence of aborigines, which answers as well as might be expected.

Under instructions from the Honorable the Minister, I drafted a Bill dealing with this subject somewhat on the lines of the Act lately passed in Queensland. It is indisputable that many of the collisions which take place between the Europeans and other races with the aborigines, frequently resulting in the loss of life or serious bodily injury, are due to interference with the lubras. This is the conclusion at which I have arrived from the facts disclosed in the many cases which have come before me in my judicial capacity. The case tried at the last Criminal Sittings of the Circuit Court is one in point. The evidence, in my judgment, clearly showed that the murder of the men, Moore and McKenzie, was committed by the natives in consequence of the former taking some lubras, *nolens volens*, from their tribe, and appropriating them for their own purposes, and otherwise illtreating one of the natives. They evidently attacked the deceased men unawares, otherwise probably the encounter would have resulted in some of the natives being shot and the remainder "dispersed," and no one would have been the wiser. Those who escaped would no doubt have taken vengeance on the first opportunity by spearing some innocent person who would be entirely ignorant of the motive which prompted them to attack him. Considering the vast area of country, sparsely populated, over which it is utterly impossible to maintain any control, it is difficult indeed to suggest any remedy which would *effectually* cope with the evil which undoubtedly exists. Those who occupy the "back blocks" are, in most cases, a law unto themselves as regards their relations with the natives. If the powers I propose are conferred on the Protector of Aborigines, and wisely exercised, I am inclined to think that a better state of things may prevail, and he will be constituted a "Protector" in fact as well as in name.

Under the existing law it is impossible to bring offenders to justice who commit outrages on young aboriginal females, or half-castes, owing to the impossibility of adducing the evidence of age required by law. The conviction of the Chinaman for an offence of this description, which was quashed by the Supreme Court, on the ground, so far as I could ascertain, "that there was not sufficient proof of age," in my opinion loudly calls for an amendment of the law in this respect. From the appearance of the child in the court, the jury had no doubt, and I do not think that any person in court had any doubt whatever, that she was not more than ten or eleven years of age; and I cannot forbear saying that it seems to me it is a scandal that the state of the law should enable a criminal to escape punishment under such circumstances.

PEARL

Return of Prisoners in the Palmerston Gaol, &c.—continued.

Offence.	Number in Gaol, December 31st, 1897.	Number in Gaol, December 31st, 1898.	Brought to Gaol during Year.	Discharged during Year.
Brought forward	31	35	42	38
Absconding debtor	—	1	3	2
Contempt of Court	—	1	2	1
Having no visible means of support	1	—	—	1
Local Court debtors	1	—	2	3
Mining without a license	—	—	1	1
Unlawfully in a dwelling	1	1	—	—
Breaking and entering a dwelling	1	1	—	—
Obtaining money by false pretences	1	—	—	1
Breach of prison regulations	—	—	1	1
Travelling without a ticket	—	—	1	1
Disobeying lawful commands	—	—	19	19
Abusive language	—	—	2	2
Carnally abusing a child	—	—	1	1
Unlawful gaming	—	—	2	2
Drunkenness	—	—	1	1
Resisting the police	—	1	1	—
Unlawfully receiving opium	—	—	1	1
Wilfully illtreating a horse	—	—	2	2
Unlawfully killing cattle	—	2	2	—
	36	42	83	77

Palmerston Gaol and Labor Prison, Fanny Bay, January, 1899.

GEORGE W. H. NORCOCK, Gaoler.

CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS—MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

Palmerston, January 2nd, 1899.

Sir—I have the honor to respectfully submit to you my annual report for the departments under my charge :—

ABORIGINES.

In this department I have very little fresh to add to my last year's report. The large number of persons convicted during the year for supplying the aborigines with opium and drink shows that the traffic in the above lines still continues to a great extent. The annual distribution of blankets took place in May last, when 180 blankets were distributed, mainly to the old and infirm. There are a fair number employed by the townspeople as servants, in some cases giving much satisfaction to the employer, but it is very hard to keep them any length of time, as after a short time of service they return to bush life. There has not been much sickness of a serious nature come under my notice, but from time to time they come to me for treatment.

I would respectfully recommend an alteration in the law with respect to offences against aboriginal and half-caste girls of tender years; as their birth is never registered it is almost impossible to prove date of birth, which is required by law at present for a conviction against the offender. In one case a conviction was given, but was quashed on appeal to the Supreme Court.

DESTITUTE.

I have been called to attend several cases of destitute persons, both European and Asiatic, during the past year, some of which I have attended at my own surgery and others at the Hospital.

HOSPITAL.

During 1898 eighty patients were admitted into the Palmerston Hospital; four were still inmates on the close of the year, nine had died, and the remainder had been discharged cured or relieved. Of the patients admitted forty-four were Europeans, of whom four died; nineteen were Asiatics, of whom five died; and there were sixteen aborigines, with no deaths. The relatively high mortality among the Asiatics is due to the fact that they will not enter the institution till they are in *extremis*, preferring to treat themselves in lesser cases with concoctions obtained from their own country. The causes of death among the Europeans are—(1) cancer of uterus; (2) abscess of liver; (3) strychnine poisoning; (4) dysentery. The causes of death among the Asiatics were—(1) heart disease; (2) tubercular ulceration of intestine; (3) necrosis of shoulder and retention of urine; (4) injuries from railway accident; (5) bedsores.

The institution is in first class working order, and my own efforts have been well backed up by the nursing staff.

QUARANTINE.

There has been no need to use the Quarantine Station this year. Though plague and smallpox have been in epidemic form at Hong Kong during the earlier and middle part of the year, no case of either has reached our shores.

GAOL.

There has been very little sickness of a serious character at the gaol during the past year, though, in consequence of such a large proportion of the prisoners being opium smokers, ailments of a minor character are rather frequent, due, firstly, to the result of deprivation of the drug, causing sleeplessness, diarrhoea, nervousness, &c.; secondly, to the weakness of the system, caused by the indulgence of the opium habit rendering them more susceptible to minor complaints.

There were three deaths at the gaol during 1898, due to—1, poisoning (self inflicted); 2, beri-beri; 3, heart failure.

Sanitary precautions have been carefully carried out and cleanliness has been thoroughly observed, which accounts in a great measure for the absence of sickness of a severe kind among the prisoners.

I have, &c.,

F. GOLDSMITH, M.B., Ch.B., Government Medical Officer and Protector of Aborigines.

His Honor Mr. Justice Dashwood, Government Resident, Palmerston.

ROMAN