

1911.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

NORTHERN TERRITORY.

REPORT

OF THE

GOVERNMENT RESIDENT

FOR THE

YEAR 1910.

Presented by Command ; ordered to be printed, 20th December, 1911.

[Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; 950 copies; approximate cost of printing and publishing, £38.]

Printed and Published for the GOVERNMENT of the COMMONWEALTH of AUSTRALIA by J. KEMP,
Government Printer for the State of Victoria.

No. 66.—F.17980.

that these boats will be taken off. The advantages of this line to this port have been lessened by the fact that the time table is almost the same as that of the "Burns Philp" line. It is regrettable that some provision has not been made to arrange the time tables of the various lines of steamers calling here, so that there would be mails at no greater interval of time than, say, two weeks. The total number of steamers calling at Darwin each year is about 42 each way, yet at times we have been four or five weeks without a mail from south. I represented this matter to the South Australian Government, who could not effect any improvement.

POPULATION.

The population of the Territory is about stationary. Europeans are increasing slightly in numbers, but many of the younger and abler workers of the Chinese have left for other parts of Australia, which keeps the total population about equal to last year's. The departure of so many of the young Chinese has caused an increase in the wages of Chinese workmen. Another result is that there is an abnormal number of old and decrepit left here to live upon their countrymen's charity; many of these seem to do nothing in the way of getting money, except occasionally supplying aborigines with intoxicating liquor or opium.

Mine-owners are now paying as high as 8s. 6d. a day for Chinese miners.

The high wages paid to Chinese miners necessarily causes higher wages to obtain in other departments, and, consequently, the Asiatics are seeking and obtaining abnormally high wages for their services. As there are almost no white domestic servants in the Territory, many house-wives cannot afford the luxury of a help, except that of an aboriginal.

This is one of the reasons why women do not like living in the Territory. The lot of the ordinary house-wife is toilsome, and, especially in the wet season, very trying.

ABORIGINES.

The condition of the aborigines is not satisfactory. There are many difficulties in the way of improving it. Taken altogether, I believe the treatment they receive from employers is good.

There are, no doubt, some cases of ill treatment which are magnified by well meaning, inexperienced persons, who have formed what are, in my opinion, wrong ideas of the capacity and habits of the aboriginals.

The chief ground of complaint that has a really good foundation is as to the physical condition. It is humiliating to contemplate the evil effects produced among the aborigines by the introduction of opium and intoxicating liquors, and, worse still, of syphilis. These evils are more marked in the settled districts, as a matter of course. It is much easier to point out the evils than to suggest any remedies that are likely to be possible. The newly-appointed protector will have no easy task in combating them.

His appointment precludes my dealing further with this matter, which, properly, should be left to him. I cannot, however, leave the subject without pointing out the sad condition of the half-castes, especially of the females, who are considered by many to be a proper prey for their passions. If the half-caste female remains with the tribe we lose a possible good addition to European civilization, while with her undoubted higher instincts she is not regarded as a favorable addition to the camp. If she is brought into civilization she finds no companionship, and naturally drifts downward.

The greater part of Bathurst Island is reserved for the aboriginals. The leasing of portion of it may prove objectionable. The island, as a whole, gave possibilities for splendid trial in the establishment of mission schools and plantations. An area of 10,000 acres was set apart for the mission of the Church of Rome. From the businesslike way in which the work is being undertaken, I have no doubt this mission will be a success.

The Anglicans have a mission on the Roper River. I am informed that this mission is well conducted, and it is contemplating keeping three or four female missionaries at the station.

Mr. Barry has been trying to bring up some of the young aboriginals in the practices of christian civilization. His quarters are in Darwin, and he is handicapped by having no regular employment, such as gardening or farming at which to put the young under his charge.

India Rubber.—The following rubber-producing plants are represented in this garden, viz. :—Para rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*), Palay rubber (*Cryptostegia grandiflora*), Assam rubber (*Ficus elastica*), Rigo rubber (*Ficus rigo*), Ceara rubber (*Manihot glaziovii*), Remanso rubber (*Manihot piauhyensis*), Jeque rubber (*Manihot dichotoma*), Central American rubber (*Castilloa elastica*), and Lagos silk rubber (*Funtumia elastica*). Para rubber makes very good growth, and our largest specimen measures 47 inches in circumference at 3 feet from the ground. It is one of the few plants tried in the Northern Territory which has not been attacked by the white ant (*Termite*), though the depredations of another species (*Termes gestroi*) are causing much alarm in the Federated Malay States, where this rubber is largely, if not almost exclusively, planted.

To my mind, the species *par excellence* for culture in the Northern Territory is the Ceara rubber (*Manihot glaziovii*), or the nearly-related *Manihot piauhyensis* or *Manihot dichotoma*. These plants make extremely rapid growth with us, and would be fit for tapping in the third year. Ceara rubber reproduces itself naturally in our waste land by the seed which it bears profusely, and the other two species of *Manihots*, which are now approaching the fruiting stage, may be expected to do so likewise.

The rubber yielded by these *Manihot* species is valued on a par with Para rubber.

Several of our native trees are worthy of being tested for their rubber production.

Cotton.—A small block was planted last season with Sea Island and Egyptian varieties, which have proved themselves so well adapted to our soil and climate. As previously mentioned, cotton of the Sea Island type is either indigenous to the Northern Territory, or has become so well naturalized that it cannot be distinguished as an escape from cultivation.

Citronella Oil Grass.—This plant thrives admirably here, and I think could be worked on a large scale with machinery, to successfully compete against cheap labour elsewhere.

A native species of *Andropogon* appears to be well worth testing for its essential oil.

Starch-producing plants are represented in this nursery by the Bermuda arrowroot (*Maranta*), Tous le Mois, or red arrowroot, Cassava (the tapioca plant), *Pachyrrhizus* (the yam bean), which exists already as an escape from cultivation, and *Tacca pinnatifida* (South Sea Island arrowroot), which is indigenous to the country.

I believe several of these plants will be important adjuncts in pig raising, the animals harvesting the tubers themselves.

I have, &c.,

NICHOLAS HOLTZE.

REPORT OF THE PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES.

I have the honour to submit my annual report on the aboriginals of the Northern Territory,

During the year some little improvement has been made in the sanitary condition of the native camps; but so long as the natives are allowed to harbor their mangy dogs, their camps, however clean in other respects, will have an impress of filth.

I do not hold with the indiscriminate destruction of their dogs, but the natives, however reluctantly they may view the loss of even these diseased brutes, would be infinitely better without them, and measures should at once be taken to destroy these horrible looking beasts.

Better protection has been a theme for years, and is most urgently needed.

The Act lately passed by the South Australian Legislature contains many useful measures, but at present is inoperative for want of administrative machinery, and until Protectors are appointed under that Act its provisions cannot be carried out. In this respect I would strongly recommend that a Chief Protector be appointed to reside in Port Darwin, and at least three Protectors for outside districts—one on the Adelaide River, one on the Roper River, and one on the Victoria River. These Protectors should be middle-aged energetic bushmen; they should be appointed Justices of the Peace so as to deal with minor offences while travelling round their districts. Monthly reports should be furnished the Chief Protector, who should have chief and full control, subject to the approval of the Minister for the Department.

With careful supervision, the young natives could be made useful on the reserves and assist in supporting those who could not work.

The register of half-castes started by me on my appointment two years ago is still kept up, and shows a considerable increase during the year, although many are born in the back country that are never registered. Several half-caste girls have been taken in hand by the Sisters of the Port Darwin Convent, and appear to be happy and contented.

Mr. Barry, a missionary, also has a few half-caste boys. However, the majority of these unfortunate beings are scattered over the Northern Territory, and fast becoming a menace to law and order. Their lot is, indeed, an unhappy one. A more complete control is most urgently required.

The aboriginal is, undoubtedly, capable of great improvement, but this can only be effected by separating them from their intercourse with Asiatic races. Numbers of native women are living with Asiatics, and often with the consent of their own people; and are encouraged in a life of idleness and depravity. Among these people a most undesirable race is rapidly increasing.

It is remarkable how rapidly the civilized native is losing that upright carriage and manly vigor so pronounced in the untutored away-back savage. I have, during a residence of 41 years in the Northern Territory, visited nearly every portion of it, and have had opportunities, not afforded to many others, in noticing this rapid change. Truly, civilization with the aboriginal is a failure.

Complaints are continually being made to me, by the natives, of Malays, Filipinos, and others interfering with their women, and also of ill-treatment, and until some Act for the better protection of the native and those who employ them is workable, I am powerless to act.

The following is a comparative statement of the number of half-castes in the Northern Territory registered at this office during years 1909 and 1910, showing increase and decrease during those years :—

Extraction.	1909.		1910.		Increase.		Decrease.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Europeans	40	44	43	46	3	2	..	..
Chinese	7	8	8	9	1	1	..	..
Cingalese	2	1	2	1	..	..	..	..
Malay	2	3	3	4	1	1	..	..
Filipinos	2	2	3	5	1	3	..	..
French Creole	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
	54	58	60	65	6	7	..	..

Total increase, 13 children.

This increase does not represent the total number of half-castes born in the Northern Territory during 1910, but only those registered at this office.

I estimate the number of half-castes now in the Northern Territory to be 200, 35 per cent. of which have arrived at maturity, with a predominating percentage of females.

The full-blooded native population is decreasing, and in the settled districts this decrease is most conspicuous.

In my last report, I estimated the population to be 13,600, and although the numbers are decreasing, it is too soon to venture on a reduction of the entire numerical strength.

I was resident at Borroloola, at the head of the Gulf of Carpentaria, for six years, and moved a good deal among the native tribes, but could never muster more than 50 or 60 members of any one tribe.

The large rivers, such as the Roper, Limmen, Calvert, and Robinson Rivers, in the Gulf of Carpentaria; the Liverpool, Alligator, and Adelaide Rivers, on the North Coast; and Daly, Fitzmaurice, and Victoria Rivers, on the West Coast, are the principal resorts of the Northern Territory natives. Some of the large permanent waters in the interior are centres of a large number of natives.

In consequence of my other duties, I have not been able to move about among the natives, but the police have materially assisted me in gathering a lot of information concerning them.

The Aboriginal Trust Fund, started by me and operated upon by the Secretary to the Government Resident and myself, now shows £103 3s. in operation. I am endeavouring to persuade all the employers of natives to bank their earnings, particularly those who are employed in the back country.

I have, &c.,

W. G. STRETTON.

REPORT OF THE HEAD KEEPER, POINT CHARLES LIGHTHOUSE.

I have the honour most respectfully to forward my report for the year ending 31st December, 1910.

The consumption of oil in the exhibition of the light has been 333 gallons 3 quarts and $\frac{1}{2}$ pint; the lights in dwellings and watchroom consuming 56 gallons 2 quarts. Five hundred gallons of "Snowflake" oil was received in July, and 340 gallons 1 pint are now on hand.

The incandescent installation is still proving satisfactory, and saving for one small breakage (which has been repaired), has given no trouble.

The lighthouse has been painted inside and out, and the boats are in good order. The heavy gale and phenomenal tides in April damaged both boats considerably. The rainfall has been phenomenal, no less than 92 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches for the year; this is about 10 inches over previous records. The garden has done well, and we have had a continuous supply of fruit. Keeper Goodman resigned his position, and W. M. Drysdale was appointed 3rd keeper, and Keeper Sheppard promoted to 2nd. Keeper Sheppard then went on three months' holiday, and A. S. Drysdale was appointed temporarily. The two brothers have so far proved themselves careful and painstaking workmen, and I am pleased with them. We have all worked amicably together, and there has been no sickness on the station.

I have, &c.,

HUGH W. CHRISTIE.