

1920-1921.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF

THE ACTING ADMINISTRATOR

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1920.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Acting Administrator's Report—	
Review of the Year	3
The Pastoral Industry	5
Government Cattle Stations	8
Domestication of the Buffalo	9
The Mining Industry	11
Government Wells and Bores	14
The Agricultural Industry	14
Daly River Settlers	15
Federal Railways	16
Darwin Jetty and Sorting Shed	16
Health of the White Population	17
General Policy regarding Aborigines	18
Federal Representation	21
Judiciary	22
Financial System	22
Prices Board	23
Government Store	23
Government Shipping	23
State Hotels	24
Government Electric Light and Freezer Plant	25
Harbor Authorities	25
Darwin Municipality	26
The Civil Service	26
Government Secretary's Department—	
Residents and Administrators	28
Chronology of Leading Events	28
List of Permanent Officials	29
Public Debt of Northern Territory	32
Revenue, 1911 to 1920	33
Expenditure, 1911 to 1920	33
Population, 1881 to 1920	34
White Population of Territory	34
Alphabetical Index of Ordinances	35
Northern Territory Mail Services	35
Prices of Commodities, 1914 to 1920	36
Lands and Survey Department	37
Revenue Received, 1908 to 1920	38
Areas of Pastoral Holdings, 1920	38
Areas designed for Pastoral Leases	40
Progressive development Pastoral Industry	40
Mines Department	41
Revenue for Year	47
Miners Employed, 1894 to 1920	49
Mineral Production to date	49
Government Assistance to Mining	50
Mineral Production for Year	51
Government Stations	53
Stock and Brands Department	54
Live Stock in Territory, 1884 to 1919	54
Veterinary Department	55
Department of Agriculture and Botanic Gardens	55
Meteorology	59
Mean Annual Rainfall, 27 Stations	59
Monthly Rainfall, 12 Stations	60
Annual Rainfall, Powell's Creek, 42 years	60
Public Works Department	60
Supreme Court	61
Public Health Department	62
Aboriginal Department	65
Education	66
State Hotels	67
Balance-sheet	71
Mounted Constabulary	72
Northern Territory Shipping	74
Public Trustee	77
Government Store	78
Darwin Gaol and Labour Prison	79

century opened it was an axiom that the tropics could never be colonized by white people. It has been the supreme accomplishment of medicine . . . to remove what has hitherto been an effectual bar to the successful exploitation of the richest parts of the world."

The wisdom of the White Australia policy has been emphasized by the report recently presented to the Medical Congress at Brisbane by the sub-committee appointed to investigate the whole question of the occupation of tropical Australia by white people.

The pronouncement of the Committee that it was "unable to find anything pointing to the existence of inherent or insuperable obstacles in the way of permanent occupation of tropical Australia by a healthy indigenous white race" must be received with respect as emanating from a learned body, skilled in the science of health. This important decision was not based on theory but deduced from the voluminous evidence of doctors long resident in the tropics, whose testimony strongly upheld the view that the Northern portion of Australia was suitable for the successful permanent settlement of the working white race.

In acclimatising the white race in the North the great desiderata are immunity from exotic diseases, a suitable diet, and proper housing accommodation.

Northern Australia enjoys a striking immunity from serious tropical diseases, thanks to the White Australia policy.

The death rate amongst the white population for the year under review was only 6.4 per 1,000, which compares more than favorably with any part of Australia.

The epidemic diseases of Asia—plague, cholera, small-pox and many others—must be kept out by an impenetrable quarantine line at our Northern ports. Railway facilities to the Macdonnell Ranges will supply a cool sanatorium which is so desirable for the sustained vigour of women and children. With the exception of the western coast of Queensland, Northern Australia appears to have no places suitable for sanatoria owing to the absence of plateaux of any considerable elevation.

Mosquito borne diseases such as malaria, are fortunately not prevalent in the Northern Territory, and are found only in certain isolated spots, such as the Daly River, and the Maranboy tin field.

Arrangements have been entered into by the Commonwealth Government, the International Health Board (Rockefeller Foundation), and the Commonwealth quarantine authorities by which the Quarantine Medical Officer at Darwin will commence an investigation into the prevalence or otherwise of hookworm (*ankylostomiasis*) in the Territory.

It is hoped the anticipation, that this disease is not widespread in the Territory, will be borne out by actual examinations, as the hookworm does not usually flourish in dry countries.

The hospital staffs have carried out their duties with a devotion that is deserving of all praise. It is hoped that arrangements will be made before long to relieve the monotony of the lives of the sisters at the Darwin Hospital by the provision of a tennis court and a piano. It is also proposed to erect swimming baths at Doctor's Gully, adjoining the hospital grounds.

The Australian Inland Mission, under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church, has accomplished most valuable work at the Maranboy tin field. Two trained sisters have been stationed there for some time, and their devoted labours amongst the miners, where malaria fever has been rather prevalent, has won the respect and gratitude of all.

It would be an excellent thing for the Territory if the Government could co-operate with the Mission in providing skilled medical assistance for those inland settlements where there are at present no doctors or nurses for perhaps hundreds of miles.

I am informed that the Government of Western Australia has now recognised the Inland Mission Homes as public hospitals.

GENERAL POLICY IN REGARD TO ABORIGINALS.

It is difficult at present to make more than an intelligent guess at the number of aboriginals in the Territory, though an effort will be made when the decennial census of white people and coloured aliens is taken next April to also estimate the number of natives in each census division of the Territory.

Sir Baldwin Spencer, Professor of Biology in the University of Melbourne, who had previously travelled through the Territory and in conjunction with Mr. Gillan had written two valuable works on the native tribes, reached Darwin on 15th June, 1911, under the auspices of the Federal Government, to study the aboriginal population. Towards the end of 1912 Sir Baldwin Spencer was appointed for twelve months Special Commissioner and Chief Protector of Aborigines. Writing of the number of natives in the Territory, he states—"Judging by what I have seen and heard, I think it probable that a census would show more nearly 50,000 than 20,000."

Putting the number therefore at 35,000, we can compare it with an estimated aboriginal population of 24,000 in Western Australia and 18,000 in Queensland.

As the Northern Territory is controlled by the Commonwealth Government the care of the aboriginals becomes a national responsibility, and an obligation rests on the nation of doing everything possible to preserve and uplift the native inhabitants.

The greatest difficulty that confronts the Administration in dealing with the natives is the fact that they do not form themselves into settled communities, with individual possession in land as in New Guinea. They are pure nomads with no fixed abode, they wander about within their tribal boundaries hunting for such food as is provided by nature, just as animals do. The Australian native has never of his own initiative cultivated a cereal or attempted to domesticate any animal as a food supply. Unfortunately the native, who shows great intelligence in bush-craft, appears to have no inclination to settle down as a husbandman. Cases have occurred where Government officials have given young men leaving their employ grain to plant on their return to their tribe; in some cases these have been planted but have been destroyed by the older men as soon as the little crop came up.

The aborigines of the Territory are divided into a large number of tribes, each of which speaks a distinct dialect and occupies a well defined tract of country, the boundaries of which are well known to the natives.

Sir Baldwin Spencer says—"It is impossible to remove them from their own country, as this would mean extermination by hostile tribes, even supposing, which is practically impossible of accomplishment, they could be detained elsewhere."

The natives of Australia have never been recognised as having any legal title to their tribal lands. The whole of the lands of Australia were constituted Crown lands and under various Land Acts have been sold or leased by the various Governments to white settlers.

In the Northern Territory long leases of large areas have been granted to pastoralists extending uninterruptedly in the aggregate over hundreds of miles of country, and many native tribes have not a square foot of land that they can call their own, although they are still living on their tribal lands that have been theirs from time immemorial.

I have given this problem of the Northern Territory the fullest and most anxious consideration, and I feel sure that the best solution of the question lies in the able and well considered recommendations of Sir Baldwin Spencer, who states—"There are two alternatives, either to allow them to wander about as outcasts, some of them doubtless working for the settlers but all of them practically dependent for their existence on promiscuous charity, or to establish a reserve for them under proper control. To be of any practical use, the reserve must be situated somewhere in their own district. To attempt to move them to some other part and place them amongst strange natives would be futile. . . . There is no other practicable policy but that of the establishment of large reserves, if the aborigines are to be preserved and if any serious effort is to be made for their betterment."

He recommended that the following areas should be declared aboriginal reserves:—Oenpelli (East Alligator River), 2,300 square miles; Daly River, 3,300 square miles; Roper River, 211 square miles; Bathurst Island, 786 square miles; Groote Island, 896 square miles; Lake Woods (Newcastle Waters), 200 square miles; Hermannsburg Mission Station, 901 square miles. He also stated that other stations could be established as the need for them arises.

I have endeavoured to carry out these proposals in their entirety. I gazetted Groote Island an Aboriginal Reserve on 8th May, 1920; Oenpelli on the 22nd May, 1920; and Daly River on the 22nd October, 1920. At Oenpelli there has been a Protector of Aborigines since 1912.

I also gazetted, at the instance of the Minister, an area of 21,875 square miles in the extreme south-west of the Territory as an Aboriginal Reserve on the 10th July, 1920.

The Aboriginal Reserves and Aboriginal Mission Stations are now as follows:—

ABORIGINAL RESERVES IN EXISTENCE OR PROPOSED ON 16TH OCTOBER, 1920.

Date Gazetted.	Name of Reserve.	Locality.	Area in Square Miles.
28.4.1892	Woolner Reserve	North Coast	366
"	Monassie Reserve	"	115
"	Larakeah Reserve	Adelaide River	20
"	Wangites Reserve	North of Daly River	388
"	Woolwonga Reserve	Mary River	160
29.3.1888	Marramunga Reserve	Tennants Creek	150
17.6.1901	Mudbuna Reserve	N.W. Victoria River Downs	379
18.1.1913	Wongoak Reserve	Bathurst Island	755
22.5.1920	Oenpelli Reserve	East Alligator River	2,000
8.5.1920	Groote Island Reserve	Gulf of Carpentaria	896
10.7.1920	Lake Amadeus Reserve	S. W. corner of Northern Territory	21,875
2.10.1920	Daly River Reserve	Daly River	3,300
16.10.1920	Batchelor Reserve	Darwin-Pine Creek Railway	243
..	Proposed	Robinson River	1,885
..	"	Frew River	365
			32,897

The first eight mentioned reserves were re-gazetted in 1912 to bring them under the provisions of the Commonwealth Aboriginal Ordinance.

ABORIGINAL MISSION STATIONS.

Goulburn Island Mission	44 square miles
Roper River Mission	211 "
Hermannsburg Mission	901 "
Bathurst Island Mission (included in Aboriginal Reserve shown above).	
	<u>1,156</u> "

Total area of Aboriginal Reserves and Aboriginal Mission Stations, 34,053 square miles (21,793,920 acres).

It will be seen that during the last six months the area of Aboriginal Reserves has been increased from 2,333 square miles to 32,897 square miles.

To insure that the natives are not dispossessed of their hereditary tribal hunting grounds and "made dependent for their existence on promiscuous charity" it should be laid down as the settled policy of Australia that in every district of the Territory an area must be reserved for the aboriginals which they will recognise as their own land and on which they can live and hunt if they so desire. Each of these reserves should have permanent water and timber so that there is always available an adequate supply of their natural food—fish, animal life, yams, lily roots, seeds, &c.

It is not desired in any way to discourage the employment of natives by white settlers. The natives are well treated and are much better off when regularly employed and provided with good and ample food. There are, however, throughout the settled portions of the Territory large numbers of old men, women and children who are not employed. These form camps on the pastoral holdings and are fed by the station owners—who generously supply beef to the camps when an animal is killed—and by the aboriginals who are employed on the stations.

The natives have intensely communistic habits within their tribe and appear to have no idea of private ownership. If a native earns money or acquires goods he immediately divides it up with others in the tribe.

The conditions of employment of native labour may possibly, owing to legislature of the future, become so onerous that the station owner cannot continue the present patriarchal methods, and the lot of the aboriginals would then become pitiful if they were also deprived of lands set apart as aboriginal reserves.

It would not be advisable or necessary to erect buildings on all these reserves and appoint Superintendents, Matrons and School Teachers, the objective being to provide a sanctuary for the native population, or, in other words, mitigate the apparent harshness of the decision that all native lands shall become Crown lands.

If any of these reserves are not being used by the natives and are not likely to be required in the immediate present, annual grazing licences could be granted over them and the revenue so derived might be devoted to augmenting the annual aboriginal vote which is expended for the benefit of the natives. By this means large areas would not be locked up but would contribute their quota to revenue and wealth production, while at the same time they would be always available if required in the interests of the natives.

At the present time three of our Aboriginal Reserves—Oenpelli, Daly River and Batchelor—have buildings erected and married superintendents to look after the welfare of the natives. There is also an Aboriginal Compound at Darwin with a Superintendent and Matron to look after the aboriginals and educate the native and half-caste children.

The expenditure in the Aboriginal Department as set down in the estimates for the ensuing year is as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Chief Protector of Aboriginals (this office is included in the duties of the Government Secretary)			
Three Protectors at £400	1,200	0	0
Four Sergeants and 27 Mounted Constables at £20 a year	620	0	0
Two School Teachers	200	0	0
Grant in aid of Aboriginal Missions, Roper River, £250; Bathurst Island, £250; Goulburn Island, £250	750	0	0
Aboriginal Affairs—General Expenditure—			
Blankets, Food Medicines, &c.	5,600	0	0
Improvements—Oenpelli	500	0	0
Improvements—Daly	800	0	0
	<u>£9,670</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

This is approximately the annual expenditure of the Government of Western Australia on the aboriginal inhabitants of that State.

HEALTH OF THE NATIVES.

Dr. Brienl, M.D., Director of the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine, Townsville, in his medical report on a journey through some districts of the Northern Territory, says of the natives :—“ It is evident from our observations that the natives of the Northern Territory are, in their natural state, very healthy when compared with those of other tropical countries. Those natives on the other hand, who have come into contact with the new settlers, whites and Chinamen, rapidly fall victims to the diseases which had been introduced with the settlement.”

The great danger to the well-being of the natives is the introduction of infectious and contagious diseases and their degradation by drink and opium.

Dr. M. J. Holmes (Bulletin No. 6) states :—“ Where aborigines and the Chinese are thrown much together the evil effect of opium on the former is only too apparent. The aboriginal becomes very readily addicted to the opium habit, and amongst them it rapidly induces the very lowest grade of mental, moral and physical degradation.”

Sir Baldwin Spencer states :—(Bulletin No. 7)—“ Nothing is more patent than the rapid degeneration of the native in contact with Chinese.”

Everything possible is done to keep natives away from the Chinese quarters by proclaiming them “ prohibited areas,” but it is very difficult to completely carry out this policy in practice, especially in the mining districts of the country.

It would not be just to blame all the Chinese for these deplorable happenings, but it is safe to say that as long as Chinese remain here opium will be smuggled into the Territory and certain aborigines will receive the drug for purposes of prostitution.

The Chinese population is becoming less every year and now numbers only 1,076.

I cannot speak too highly of the splendid work carried out by the Christian Mission to the aborigines at Bathurst Island, Goulburn Islands and the Roper River. The natives and half-castes receive moral scholastic and industrial training that elevates them far above the tribal natives, as they enjoy both the example and precept of those who are willingly devoting their lives in hardship and isolation for the benefit of their fellow men.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATION.

The Northern Territory is the last province of Australia to claim the toga of citizenship.

The promise of the Prime Minister of Australia that a Bill would be introduced to give the people of the Northern Territory a representative in the National Parliament was received throughout the Territory with the keenest pleasure.

The history of the struggles of the people of the various colonies of Australia for the right to make the laws that they are called upon to obey is interesting and instructive.

In 1842, the Imperial “ Act for the Government of New South Wales and Van Dieman’s Land ” gave the colony “ representative ” government creating a new council consisting of twelve nominated members—six official and six non-official—and twenty-four elected members.

The Imperial Act of 1850 allowed New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia to recommend the form of government they preferred, although the population of those four colonies numbered at that time less than three quarters of a million.

The province of South Australia gave a vote to all men of full age who had lived six months in the colony for the Legislative Assembly. The Assembly to be triennial. This constitution came into force in 1856, three years before Queensland became a colony. This was probably the first manhood suffrage assembly in the Empire.

In other ways South Australia led the way towards modern democracy. She was the first of the Australian colonies to pay her members of Parliament, and the first to give women a vote.

In conformity with the liberal traditions of the South Australian people it was natural that at a very early date (1890) a full and liberal franchise should be conferred upon the European settlers of the Northern Territory who at that date numbered only 1,144 white people, and 3,754 coloured aliens.

The South Australian Government allowed the white people of the Territory on an adult suffrage franchise to elect two members to sit in the South Australian Legislative Assembly, and on the 18th April, 1890, Mr. V. L. Solomon and the Hon. J. L. Parsons were elected to represent the Northern Territory in the South Australian Parliament.

In addition to these two members the people of the Northern Territory were allowed to vote for the election of a member for the Legislative Council by being included in that member’s electorate.

They were also privileged to take their full part in the great decision as to whether the Australian colonies should form a federated nation.

At the first Federal elections in 1901 a further privilege was exercised by the white residents of the Northern Territory as they were granted full voting rights both in the election of the Federal senators and a member of the House of Representatives for South Australia and the Northern

REPORT OF THE ABORIGINAL DEPARTMENT.

I have the honour to report on the Aboriginal Department for the year ending 30th June, 1920.

In October of last year, the Chief Protector, Mr. H. E. Carey, was called south and no arrangements were made for his successor until January, 1920, when I was appointed Acting Chief Protector of Aborigines.

I am pleased to report that the affairs of this Department are in a satisfactory condition.

The health of the aborigines throughout the Territory has been very good, with the exception of the influenza epidemic, which visited the Territory in December, 1919, and carried off a number of old and infirm aborigines.

The town and district of Darwin have continued in a satisfactory manner.

I would respectfully point out the unsatisfactory position in working this Department, owing to the incomplete condition of the Aboriginal Ordinance now in force.

The aboriginal schools at Darwin and Alice Springs are progressing favorably; the attendance at both these schools has increased. The half-caste girls make useful domestics. Some of them have been taken as far as Adelaide under agreement with their employers and have given great satisfaction.

The position of the aboriginal reserve at Oenpelli, on the East Alligator River, was reported good.

The condition of the various Aboriginal Missions in the Territory is most satisfactory.

During the year a large quantity of unserviceable blankets and clothing has been received from the Defence Department and was much appreciated.

Some have been distributed amongst the aborigines at all stations where officers are quartered in the Northern Territory.

I recommend that steps be taken to board out to respectable married people in the Northern Territory or other States, half-caste children of seven years and upwards.

In my opinion, under proper supervision and properly cared for, they would become useful members of the community.

I suggest that a diary be kept at each Station in which should be entered daily how the officers are employed, as well as circumstances of note, and that a copy be sent to me at the end of each month or when opportunity offers.

Also a monthly statement of rations supplied to aborigines should be furnished.

I understand free rations are supplied officers at stations which are entered on aboriginal requisitions.

In my opinion, this should be discontinued, and a cash allowance made in lieu, the same as made to married constables, and if this is not considered advisable, that a separate requisition be rendered.

W. WATERS,
Acting Chief Protector of Aborigines.

Darwin, 9th September, 1920.

REPORT OF PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES.

DISTRICT OF DARWIN.

I have the honour to forward you this my Report for the year 1919-20.

The aborigines in this district have increased in numbers. Every year I notice when the aborigines return from the bush they bring more of their countrymen with them, which points out that the aborigines are fairly well satisfied with conditions in Darwin.

The employment of aborigines in Darwin is far from satisfactory. I still have trouble with Europeans regarding the treatment and payment of aborigines.

Blankets were issued as usual to all the old and infirm aborigines and children in the district.

On 31st December, 1919, I proceeded to Pine Creek to assist and report on the influenza epidemic. I took with me 360 doses of influenza mixture, 360 doses of cough mixture, 1 case milk, 2 bags of rice, and 100 blankets. Medicine was also forwarded to all centres along the line in case of emergency.

On 31st March, 1920, I again visited the head of the line at the Katherine, and arranged for rations and blankets to be forwarded to the old and infirm aborigines *en route*.

The following are the particulars of offences committed by aborigines in Darwin during the year:—

Offence.	Number.
Prohibited area	29
Disobeying lawful orders	1
Escaping from custody	1
Unlawful possession	3
Drunk	15
Resisting police	1
Total	50

The hop beer which I complained of in my last Annual Report is still being supplied, but I am informed another Department is moving in the matter, and will I hope in time prevent hop beer being sold to aborigines, with such a large percentage of alcohol.

During the year, at the Administrator's request, I took a census of all the foreign population in Darwin.

I would also point out that I was instrumental in procuring from the Defence Department a large number of blankets and clothing, free of cost.

R. MACDONALD,
Protector of Aborigines.

8th September, 1920.

F.3613.—5.

LIST OF ABORIGINAL RESERVES IN EXISTENCE, OR PROPOSED ON 6TH OCTOBER, 1920.

Date Gazetted.	Name of Reserve.	Locality.	Area in Sq. Miles.
28.4.1892	Woolner Reserve	North Coast	366
"	Monassie Reserve	" "	115
"	Larakeah Reserve	Adelaide River	20
"	Wangites Reserve	North of Daly River	388
"	Woolwonga Reserve	Mary River	160
29.3.1888	Marramunga Reserve	Tennant's Creek	150
17.6.1909	Mudbuna Reserve	North-west Victoria River Downs	379
18.1.1913	Wongoak Reserve	Bathurst Island	755
22.5.1920	Oenpalli Reserve	East Alligator River	2,000
8.5.1920	Groote Island Reserve	Gulf of Carpentaria	896
10.7.1920		South-west corner of Northern Territory	21,375
2.10.1920	Daly River Farm Reserve	Daly River	3,300
	Proposed..	Batchelor Farm	208
	"	Robinson River	1,885
	"	Frew River	365
			32,862

MISSION STATIONS.

Goulburn Island Mission	44 square miles.
Roper River Mission	211 " "
Hermanburg Mission	901 " "
Bathurst Island Mission, included in Aboriginal Reserve shown above	755 " "
	1,911 " "

REPORT OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

I have the honour to report on the work of the Education Department for the year ending 30th June, 1920.

SCHOOLS AND ATTENDANCES.

Owing to an outbreak of influenza in November, 1919, the Darwin and Parap schools were closed on 24th November by order of the Health Department, and were not re-opened until after the Christmas vacation. Colds and fevers have also been more prevalent than usual during the latter part of the year, considerably influencing the attendance at all schools.

The closing down of the meat works and the consequent departure of families has lessened the average of the Parap school during the past few months. So far it has not affected the attendance at any of the other schools. The attendance at the Darwin school for June, 1920, was the highest during the whole year.

The average attendance at Alice Springs increased from 30 to 40 during the year.

Early in the year the school building at Brock's Creek was removed and re-erected at Emungalan. Accommodation for the teacher was also attached. The following table shows the number of children instructed at each school during the year, the annual average and figures for various months:—

School.	Number Instructed during Year.	Average for Year.	Highest Monthly Enrolment.	Highest Number in Attendance for any Month.	Highest Monthly Average.
Darwin	170	98·7	143	123	109·2
Parap	80	41·1	64	60	46·7
Pine Creek	22	14·4	19	17	15·8
Alice Springs	43	36·5	42	41	40·5
Emungalan	15	8·0	14	14	12·2
Kahlin Compound	34	24·5	30	30	27·5

The second table shows the averages at the Northern Territory schools since 1914.

School.	January, 1914, to June, 1915.	1915-17.	1917-18.	1918-19.	1919-20.
Darwin	54·5	72·7	88·4	109·3	98·7
Parap	..	..	48·0	42·1	41·1
Pine Creek	16·2	24·0	15·8	14·5	15·8
Alice Springs	25·0	28·8	29·9	30·3	40·5
Emungalan	..	..	..	8·3	8·0
Kahlin Compound	22·0	23·0	23·0	22·6	24·5
Brock's Creek	4·7	5·3	} Closed.		
Stapleton	..	6·8			
Daly River	8·1	3·7			
	130·5	163·3	205·1	227·1	228·6