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South  Australia.



REPORTS AND RETURNS,
FOR 1899-1900,

WITH REFERENCE TO

THE ABORIGINES

IN THE

SETTLED DISTRICTS

OF

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.



Adelaide:

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

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Aborigines' Office, Adelaide, October 2nd, 1900.

The following reports and returns with reference to the aborigines are respectfully submitted for the information of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Education :—

Number of aborigines in the settled districts of South Australia, as per census returns of 1891 (exclusive of Northern Territory)—Males, 1,661; females, 1,473. Total, 3,134.

Number of births and deaths recorded from date of census of 1891 to June 30th, 1900 :—Births, 322; deaths, 595. Excess of deaths during the nine years, 273.

The number of deaths reported last year was under the average record of the past five years.

The usual distributions of rations, clothing, and medical comforts have been made from the depôts—forty-seven in number.

The number, &c., of aborigines at the mission stations are shown as under :—

Name of Station.	Number of Aborigines.		Births.		Deaths.	
	Adults.	Children.	Blacks.	Half-castes.	Blacks.	Half-castes.
Point McLeay ..	113	110	7	13	3	3
Point Pierce	71	32	—	3	2	2
Kopperamanna ..	163	25	6	—	5	—
Totals ...	347	167	13	16	10	5

The financial returns from these stations for 1899, show—Total voluntary contributions received, £1,488 11s. 6d.; total proceeds of produce raised, £8,467 0s. 4d.; total wages paid to aborigines, £1,258 16s.; total estimated value of all buildings, stock, and produce raised on stations, £25,540 1s. 4d.

Two hundred and seventy-two aborigines received special medical treatment during the year, at a cost of £132 18s. 3d.

Number of offences with which aborigines were charged :—Drunkenness, 31; petty larceny, 2; horse-stealing, 2; lunacy, 1. Total, 36

Number of persons convicted for supplying aborigines with intoxicants, 7.

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

	South Australia.	Victoria.	New South Wales.
Number of aborigines ..	2,861 ..	433 ..	6,891
Annual vote	£4,262 ..	£4,846 ..	£16,591
Cost per head	£1 9s. 9d. ..	£11 3s. 10d. ..	£2 8s. 1d.

Eighteen aborigines have been settled on blocks of land containing from twelve to 160 acres each. With a little assistance in supplying them with some farming requisites, they will be encouraged in their efforts to earn a living independent of the mission stations.

What to do with the young people, half-castes and quadroons, who are increasing in number at the Point McLeay Mission, is a question deserving of consideration. Many of them show an intelligence that indicates a capacity for further improvement, and any scheme that promises a fair measure of success in dealing with them would be worthy of trial. If some of them could be removed from the mission station and placed under the State Children's Department there would be some chance of them becoming more useful members of the community.

The following statement shows the expenditure of the "Aborigines Vote" for the year ending June 30th, 1900:—

	£	s.	d.
Rations issued at the various depôts	1,202	1	0
Clothing, blankets, &c.	866	9	7
Canoes, fishing tackle, &c.	132	13	3
Medical attendance and medicines	132	18	3
Transport charges sundry depôts	445	7	0
Burial charges, destitute aborigines	46	16	0
Firewood (old, infirm, and sick)	12	9	3
Sundry rations, prisoners, and travellers....	15	3	0
Annual contribution, Adelaide Hospital	10	10	0
Petty, travelling, and sundry expenses ...	39	14	5
Services rendered by issuer of stores, Goolwa	12	0	0
Clerical services in office of Sub-protector, Port Augusta	12	0	0
Receiving, issuing, and storing aborigines stores at G.P.O. stores	20	0	0
Telephone exchange	10	0	0
Printing and stationery	10	9	10
O.S. telegrams	9	0	8
O.S. postage stamps	22	10	0
Grant-in-aid Aborigines Friends' Association	1,000	0	0
Salaries, Protector and Sub-protector, Far North	262	0	0
Total.....	£4,262	2	3

E. L. HAMILTON, Protector of Aborigines.

With reference to the aborigines of the Far North the Sub-protector (Mr. J. Field, Port Augusta) reports as follows :—

“The general conduct of the aborigines has been most satisfactory. My district being so large and scattered, I have not had an opportunity of visiting many of the depôts, but have reason to believe they have been properly conducted, and that the stores supplied by the Government have been carefully and judiciously issued, and the returns from the issuers have been furnished regularly. I have also obtained special reports from all the depôts.

“The issuer at Oodnadatta, M.C. Ireland, reports about 178 aboriginals in its vicinity. The able-bodied men find work in the township and on adjacent stations. The women find employment as domestics and return to their camps at night. I visited their camps twice during last year and found them fairly clean and orderly. A long-felt want has been supplied by the appointment of Dr. Kennedy as medical officer to the aborigines at Oodnadatta and Hergott and the stations between those two places, especially at Anna Creek, where there are ninety natives, many of them old and infirm, and children. They are well cared for by Messrs. Hogarth and their kind assistant, Mr. Oastler. Some of the able-bodied men are employed as boundary riders and others in rabbiting, for which they are paid in cash. Last year they produced 23,000 scalps. The reports from the Queensland border have been favorable considering the long and continuous drought. They have to live upon Nardoo seeds, rabbits, and fish. The old and infirm are well looked after at the depôts. Mr. Walker, of the Innamincka Station, employs several natives at 10s. a week and their tucker.

“At Fowler’s Bay M.C. Catchlove reports that about 250 aborigines arrived there from the back country—Wilgena and Gawler Ranges. They did not stay long and conducted themselves well. Very favorable reports have also come from the other depôts on the West Coast. In the more settled districts the aborigines have not given much trouble. Sometimes they obtain liquor, and on those occasions every endeavor is made to punish the parties giving it. Two were fined 30s. each and two were sent to gaol for a month each.

“Nineteen cases of illness were treated in the Port Augusta Hospital, and every attention and kindness was shown them by the doctors and staff.”

APPENDIX.

At the annual meeting of the Aborigines' Friends' Association, in the Town Hall, Adelaide, on the 8th of October instant, His Excellency Lord Tennyson, who presided, made the following remarks:—

“ I have great sympathy with the Aborigines' Friends' Association. My feelings on the aboriginal question are so well known that I will not enter into any particulars at this meeting. I fervently hope that more mission schools will be established, particularly in Central Australia, not too far from a railway. The Point McLeay Mission has proved so undoubted a success that it warrants further efforts in same direction in other parts of this province. I have some figures given by the Protector of Aborigines which I should like to read to you. He states that New South Wales assists the natives at the rate of £2 8s. 1d. per head; Victoria to the extent of £11 3s. 10d. per head; and South Australia, I am sorry to say, contributes only at the rate of £1 9s. 9d. per head. This gives us food for reflection.

“ Are you aware that the black women in the Northern Territory have very insufficient protection by law from, I am sorry to say, the brutality of some of the lawless white men there, and suffer accordingly? Are you aware that there is a great deal of illicit trading in liquor with the blacks there which ought to be stopped, and which is ruining them body and soul? Are you aware of what your late Chief Secretary stated last year in Parliament, that blacks are even now being carried away from their tribes by white men into virtual slavery? All I can say is that in God's name I hope that South Australia will awaken to a true sense of the responsibility that she owes to these blackfellows, and that she will put down with a strong hand these abominable iniquities.”

The Minister of Agriculture and Education (Hon. E. L. Batchelor), said—“ He congratulated the committee upon the fact that the association were showing an intense and deep interest in the natives of South Australia. It was indeed a difficult problem how best to deal with the black inhabitants whom we had supplanted. In South Australia the public funds, so far as the natives were concerned, chiefly went in providing rations and clothing in depôts scattered about the colony, and also in assisting missions like those under this association. He had heard some criticism—he was not referring to His Excellency's that evening—that they did not do

enough in the way of providing food and clothing for the natives. He was personally quite convinced that it was possible to do more harm than good by indiscriminately providing food and clothing all over the place, and so leading the natives to think there was no necessity for them to work. They might spend four or five times as much money as at present, and do a great deal less good than was being done. Idleness among whites or blacks bred all kinds of trouble, disease, and finally death, and if they took care that the assistance rendered by the public always went in the direction of helping those institutions which aided in providing work for the natives, they would do far more good than by public or private indiscriminate charity to the aborigines. He had seen natives in a good many places. He was exceedingly pleased with the excellent way in which things were managed at Point McLeay, and the inducements given there to teach the natives the dignity and usefulness of work. He had also seen them at depôts, and where there were no depôts, and he could assure the meeting that he had frequently found that where rations were not given and the men worked for their living they got the best class of natives, and they were happier and healthier than at those places where they were buoyed up with the hope of being able to live comfortably without doing anything at all to assist their own livelihood. He was referring now to the able-bodied men. He had nothing but praise to say of the manner in which Point McLeay Mission was conducted, and was convinced that the money was being spent efficiently there. It was an exceedingly happy idea of the committee—he believed it emanated from Mr. William Charlick—to bring the native children to Adelaide. He hoped that such an exhibition as they recently saw in the city would be repeated. On behalf of the Government he desired to thank the committee of the association for the work they had done, and hoped that their efforts in the future would continue to be as successful as in the past."

