

South  Australia.

REPORT

OF THE

PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 1903.



Adelaide:

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REPORT.

Aborigines Office, Adelaide, August 9th, 1903.

I have the honor respectfully to submit, for the information of the Hon. Minister of Education, &c., the following report with reference to the aborigines for year ended June 30th, 1903:—

The census returns for 1901 give the number of aborigines in the settled districts of South Australia, exclusive of Northern Territory, as under—

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	3,888

During the two years 1901-3 there have been recorded—

	Blacks.	Half-castes.	Total.
Births	40 ..	48 ..	88
Deaths	190 ..	13 ..	203

This excess of deaths (115) is above the usual average and mainly owing to the prevalence of measles and influenza in several parts of the Far North and West.

Medical aid was provided when practicable, the Colonial Surgeon was consulted, and suitable medicines forwarded to the infected stations. From reports received this action proved beneficial in checking the progress of the disease.

Mr. T. P. Gourlay, J.P., of Mount Eba Depôt, where a large number of aborigines congregate and are well looked after, says:—“Measles are still prevalent here, and several natives have been and are still bad. I have been giving them eucalyptus oil and find it excellent, as it appears to knock the thing out in three or four days—a few drops daily internally and rub themselves all over with the oil; it is wonderful the effect it has. We had many

cases, and all pulled through quickly. Rain is badly wanted here (November, 1902); the natives have had no herbs of any kind for considerably over a year."

Mr. Edginton, of Mount Serle Dépôt, where the natives suffered severely from the epidemic, reports:—"Since I received the medicine sent up for the aborigines there have been no deaths from measles; the mixtures have undoubtedly done them good. I may add it is very difficult to get them to take medicine; the old men take it away sometimes and bury it, saying, 'Whitefellow medicine no good.' The health of the tribe is now very much better."

At the Point McLeay Mission Station the epidemic also appeared, but it was well kept under control by the care and attention of Mr. Garnett, the manager, and his assistants, and the usual death rate was not exceeded.

The number of aborigines, births, and deaths at the mission stations are shown as under:—

Name of Station.	Total Number of Aborigines.	Number of Children.	Births.	Deaths.
Point McLeay	235	112	11	7
Point Pierce	120	42	8	3
Kopperamanna	172	15	2	10
Totals	527	169	21	20

The financial returns from the mission stations for 1902 show—

	£	s.	d.
Total voluntary contributions received	1,595	0	7
Total amount proceeds of produce raised	2,986	11	4
Total amount wages paid to aborigines	1,319	5	5
Total estimated value of all buildings, stock, and produce raised on the stations.....	18,627	15	9

The offences for which aborigines were convicted during the year were—

Drunkenness	34
Common assaults	10
Criminal assault with intent.....	1
Larceny	7
Total	52

and seven convictions were obtained for supplying aborigines with intoxicating liquor.

Reports reached this office last year that many Queensland blacks came to the South Australian dépôts near the border for relief owing to insufficient provision being made for them in their own

State. This matter was brought under the notice of the Hon. Chief Secretary, who made representations to the Queensland Government, and subsequently Mr. A. Walker, J.P., of Innamincka, wrote saying:—"I think we have done some good for the Queensland natives near our border, and no doubt for the future they will have more attention given to them in their own State. I must say South Australia tries to do its best for our aborigines, and about this quarter they have no cause to complain, as they have been well looked after."

Complaints frequently reach this office that the aborigines are not supplied with sufficient clothing. During the year there have been issued 2,019 blankets, 293 blue shirts, 949yds. serge, &c., and a supply of discarded uniform suits have been obtained from the Railway Department and distributed.

As regards the condition of the aborigines generally, formerly, when their hunting grounds were more extensive and natural food plentiful, if supplied with a blanket and tomahawk they were considered well equipped to obtain their living; now their position, which in some respects may be better, is in others worse. About 600, who are under the control and influence of the mission stations, lead comparatively comfortable and healthy lives; a smaller number find more or less regular employment among the farms and stations, and no reports of any serious ill-treatment have reached this office during the year.

A considerable number—over 2,000—still continue to lead a more nomadic life, and as nearly all the land in the settled districts has passed into private hands, the natives have to exist as trespassers, and are now more dependent on the Government and charitably disposed for assistance.

The moral relations of whites and blacks in the Far North and West cannot be regarded as satisfactory. The laxity of the law makes it difficult, if not impossible, to extend legal protection to native women and girls, unless actual cruelty and ill-treatment can be sufficiently proved.

An attempt was made about three years ago to deal with this question, and the Bill prepared by Mr. Justice Dashwood and laid before Parliament was referred to a Committee of the Legislative Council, and appears to have been dealt with exhaustively, as twenty-one witnesses were examined and 114 pages of evidence taken.

The recommendations of the Committee have not so far led to any further action.

The difficulty appears to be to succeed in enacting a measure which will afford sufficient protection to the aborigines, and regulate their employment by Europeans, without imposing conditions and restrictions of an unnecessary harassing character.

The correspondence of this office during the year has been—
inwards, 974; outwards, 1,745.

The amount voted by Parliament last year for this department was £4,262, and the expenditure has been as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Provisions—Flour, sugar, tea, rice, tobacco, &c...	1,895	15	3
Clothing, blankets, &c.	609	9	10
Medical attendance and medicines.....	158	6	7
Canoes, fishing tackle, &c.	51	10	7
Transport charges (forty-eighth depôts)	554	4	9
Sundry rations prisoners and travellers.....	33	8	10
Firewood (old, infirm, and sick).....	5	6	11
Burial charges, destitute aborigines	39	13	0
Petty, travelling, and sundry expenses	42	18	6
Adelaide Hospital—Annual contribution	10	10	0
Telephone exchange.....	10	0	0
Receiving and issuing stores at G.P.O. stores . .	20	0	0
Printing and stationery	7	12	10
O.S. postage stamps.....	23	12	6
O.S. telegrams	13	19	5
Clerical services in office of Sub-Protector, Far North	12	0	0
Grants-in-aid of Aborigines' Friends' Association, Point McLeay	1,000	0	0
Salaries, Protector and Sub-Protector, Far North	262	0	0
Total	£4,750	9	0

Reports are appended from—The Sub-Protector, Far North, Point McLeay Mission Station, Point Pierce Mission Station.

E. L. HAMILTON, P.A.

FAR NORTH DISTRICT.

The Sub-Protector (Mr. J. Field), Port Augusta, says:—

In submitting my annual report on the conduct and condition of the aborigines in my district for the year ended June 30th, 1903, I have the honor to state that their general conduct has been satisfactory. There has been a large amount of sickness all through the district, principally measles and influenza; a large number have died.

The district under my supervision being very large and scattered I have not been able to visit many of the depôts, but, through inquiries and the regular returns coming in, I have every reason to believe that the stores supplied by the Government have been properly distributed by the persons in charge of the depôts. A few complaints have been made, which were immediately investigated, and in most cases there was not the slightest foundation, and if found to be any cause it was at once remedied.

I am pleased to report that in most parts of my district the drought has broken up, which has made a marked difference in the supply of stores required, especially on the Queensland border.

At the present time a number of able-bodied blacks are employed on the stations and getting from 10s. to 15s. per week with rations, notably Stuart's Creek, Anna Creek, and Innamincka.

In August last Mr. Ferguson, station manager of Togmorden, reported that a number of aborigines arrived at his station from Indukoona and the Gawler Ranges in a starving condition. A good supply of stores was sent to them from Oodnadatta, a distance of seventy miles, and was kindly distributed by Mr. Ferguson, who was requested to give those who were strong enough to walk, sufficient rations to carry them to Oodnadatta by the camels that took the stores out, thus saving the expense of sending out more stores. Most of them returned to their own country when the first rains came.

Very satisfactory reports have been received from the West Coast, where most of the able-bodied men are employed by the farmers and on the sheep stations.

During the year eight aborigines were received into the Port Augusta Hospital. Four died and four were discharged, or left on their own accord; ten were also treated as out-patients, and I cannot speak too highly of the kind treatment they received from Dr. Chenery and the nurses.

The criminal records show thirteen were punished for drunkenness—most of the cases were at Tarcoola diggings; one native was sentenced to four years imprisonment for attempted rape, committed near Port Augusta; one for housebreaking, discharged; one for common assault, two months in gaol; one, petty larceny, three days in cell.

One case, at Wilmington, of supplying liquor to aborigines, a fine of 20s. and costs, 34s., was imposed."

POINT McLEAY MISSION STATION.

Mr. F. Garnett, superintendent, reports as follows:—

The health of our people has not been so good as usual; measles and mumps have both been epidemic here.

There have been eleven births, seven deaths, and four marriages during the past year.

Religious services have been regularly held and well attended, and I am pleased to report that a thoughtful and religious spirit is often shown. The church, which will comfortably seat about 140 people, is generally full every Sunday.

The educational advantages of the mission are much appreciated by the parents, there being at present eighty-one children on the school roll. This is probably a record number; last year there were only fifty-six.

Social, temperance meetings, entertainments, and young men's mutual improvement classes are held, and entered into with much spirit.

We have had no trouble with the matter of intoxicants on or about the mission.

The men have been employed on the station fencing, forestry, hedging, road-making, building, carpentering, blacksmithing, boot-making, painting, rabbiting, and general farm work. A vermin-proof fence, four miles long, has been erected on boundary of our Needles property. They have also been more or less employed by our neighboring squatters and in the South-East, breaching, digging, and shearing sheep.

The mission property generally is in good repair. We have church, school-house, officers' houses, boarding-houses for orphans, thirty-two cottages for natives, and usual farm buildings and implements. I am glad to say that all our settled natives now have cottages.

The mission land consists of about 653 acres in home block, 1,700 acres near Loveday Bay, and 900 acres at the Needles. Both the Loveday Bay and Needles reserves are very inferior in quality.

Last season we had good grass, and about 40 tons of hay from as many acres.

This season we have under cultivation five acres vines, nine acres peas, forty-three acres barley, twenty-seven acres lucern, and forty acres forestry.

Our stock consists of nineteen horses, seventy-five horned cattle, 686 sheep, and 300 lambs.

We have now eleven and a half miles sheep-proof post and wire fence, one and a half miles prickly pear fence, one mile boxthorn fence, four miles vermin-proof fence; and rabbits are well under control.

Three windmills supply water for stock, irrigation, and domestic purposes.

Wool-washing—For the first time we were not able to carry on this industry last year, owing to the lake being salt. This has been a serious financial loss to the mission.

The native population is steadily increasing, not only because of the excess of births over deaths (see above), but the success of the mission attracts aborigines from all parts of the State. The totals given to you monthly of the number of natives on the mission on last day of each month average about 235. I find about 340 natives have received food and help from the mission during past twelve months, and been partially or wholly supported here. Owing to

the wandering character of some of our blacks the monthly total given you is misleading. This increase in population is satisfactory, but notwithstanding every economy, it has completely overstrained the financial resources of this institution.

The stores, blankets, &c., supplied by you have been a great help and of good quality; we heartily thank you for the same.

POINT PIERCE ABORIGINAL MISSION, YORKE'S
PENINSULA.

Mr. B. Lathern, the superintendent, states :

I beg to submit the following report for the past year :—

This station comprises 16,000 acres of land, principally black grass and sandy country, and it is fenced and sub-divided for convenience of working. The income is derived from wool, cereals, and stock, in the raising of which the natives are employed. The figures for the year ended December 31st, 1902, were—Income, £2,074 10s. 11d.; expenditure, £2,053 2s.; leaving a credit balance of £21 8s. 11d. on the year's operations.

The number of natives on the station has averaged about 110 per month, comprising sixty-eight adults and forty-two children; of this number twelve only are black (all adults), the rest being half-castes. The number at present on the station is 120. The health of the natives generally is good; and morality and cleanliness are strictly enforced. Divine service is held twice every Sunday, and on week-nights a short prayer service is held; these are fairly well attended as a rule.

The school, which is now under the Education Department, is well conducted, there being twenty children on the roll.

The births during the year have been eight; deaths, three; marriages, one.

All the station buildings, some of which are new, are in excellent repair, and are of the class usually pertaining to an institution of this kind. The improvements also include tanks, dams, fencing, and several boats are maintained for transferring sheep and cattle to and from Wardang Island, which is part of the station property.

The stock on the station consists of 5,400 sheep, twenty-three horses, one bull, six bullocks, and forty head of mixed cattle.

Some of the men are occasionally employed by neighboring farmers, and quite a number of them are employed at various sheds during shearing season; the women are occupied with domestic duties; and everything possible is done to make the lot of the people—as long as they comply with the rules and regulations—pleasant and enjoyable.

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