

1923-4.

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THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

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NORTHERN TERRITORY.

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REPORT OF ADMINISTRATOR

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 1923.

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here, but I should like to say that I was glad to see in the Press that the opinions I gave expression to in that report were largely upheld and endorsed by the reports of the Vice-Regal and Ministerial party which visited Alice Springs during this year.

In February, 1923, a report reached Darwin *viâ* Oenpelli that Miss Matthews, a lady mission helper on Goulburn Island, was in danger of attack by aborigines, and a party of volunteers was despatched in the Quarantine launch *Calopus* to Goulburn Island, where they found Miss Matthews quite safe and unable to account for the alarmist report made. The *Calopus* is not a fully decked vessel, and at that season of the year such a voyage in such a boat is by no means unattended with risk.

In March, 1923, news was received at Darwin of an attack made by aborigines in January on two luggers, the property of Captain Edwards, of Darwin, engaged in trepang fishing off Cape Gray. It was reported that one lugger had been totally destroyed, and that two Japanese members of the crew had been either captured or killed.

An expedition was fitted out at Darwin and sailed in the *John Alee*, accompanied and assisted for a portion of the voyage by the Mission vessel *John McBride*, for the locality, and the original report was confirmed, inasmuch as it was found that one lugger had been destroyed and no trace could be found of the two missing Japanese. The adjacent coast was searched and the expedition penetrated inland for 20 miles, but saw no aborigines and could obtain no trace whatever of the missing Japanese.

Rumours reach me at intervals of trepang fishers from Torres Straits operating along the shores and islands of the Territory and of interference by them with the aborigines, and I think it very probable that the attack on Captain Edwards' luggers was connected with something of the kind, but I have no means of verifying or disproving such rumours and until something in the nature of a coast patrol is established and the flag is shown in out-of-the-way places, the whole coast line remains a happy hunting ground for poachers and regrettable incidents may be expected to take place from time to time.

Vice-Admiral Sir William Clarkson arrived at Darwin on 15th April, 1923, and after making inquiries and investigations into wharfage facilities at Darwin and in the vicinity of the North Australian Meat Works, left in H.M.A.S. *Geranium* for the Sir Edward Pellew Group, from thence he returned to Darwin on 4th June, and left southwards by s.s. *Montoro* on the 6th.

On 15th May, 1923, the Minister of State for Home and Territories (Rt. Hon. Senator G. F. Pearce, P.C.) arrived at Darwin by s.s. *Montoro*, and remained till 21st May, when he left by train for the railway terminus at Emungalan, proceeding thence by motor car *viâ* the Barkly Tableland to connect with the Queensland railway system.

The Minister visited all public institutions and the North Australian Meat Works and received a number of deputations on various subjects, and on 20th May unveiled the Ross Smith Memorial at Fannie Bay, a ceremony at which there was a large attendance of Darwin people. The Darwin Town Band rendered the musical portion of the programme, the whole of which was organized and carried out under the supervision of the Government Secretary (Mr. C. B. Story), and a guard of honour was furnished by H.M.A.S. *Geranium*.

On 17th May, a welcome to the Minister from the Northern Territory Branch of the Victoria League (President, Mrs. F. C. Urquhart) was given at the Town Hall, and on the 18th a civic welcome under the auspices of the Mayor (Mr. A. W. Adams) and the Town Council was held in the same building, and on the 19th a general reception in the Minister's honour was held in the grounds of Government Residency.

At all these functions, which were highly successful, the utmost cordiality and good feeling were manifest, and great satisfaction was felt and expressed all round with the visit of the Minister and with the living interest displayed by him in all matters pertaining to the progress and development of the Territory and the indications given of the determination of the Government to carry out a forward policy, more especially in connexion with Railway Construction, Communications, and Water Supply.

The Reports of Heads of Departments and Mission Stations are attached hereto, together with statistical tables illustrating the business of the year.

#### ABORIGINES.

With the exception of the attack on luggers at Cape Gray, aborigines proper have given very little trouble, and their health and general condition is reported as good. In the environs of Darwin some complaints arose as to their conduct, more especially when under the influence of "hop beer." This pernicious beverage was found, on analysis, to contain an illegal percentage of alcohol, whereupon two vendors of it were prosecuted, convicted, and sentenced to six months,

imprisonment, but owing to a technical error in the information, these convictions were upset on appeal. They nevertheless had a deterrent effect, and since they took place little has been heard of the sale of "hop beer" or of complaints of misconduct by aborigines. These incidents occurred since 30th June, 1923, but as the trouble they arose out of prevailed before that date I have mentioned the sequel here.

Trouble centres round what is known as "The Half-Caste Problem," which is more particularly in evidence at Alice Springs and Darwin. From the former place I made recommendations in July, 1922, which would, I believe, if adopted, have been very beneficial, but I understand it was considered that further expert advice was desired in the matter, and that action has been deferred pending the receipt of it.

At Darwin a proposition to remove the half-castes to the care of the Methodist Mission at Goulburn Island has fallen through, and the whole subject of the Darwin Compound is now under your consideration. Meantime, largely owing to energetic action by the Government Secretary, there is a noticeable improvement in the conditions obtaining there.

Although he is as well aware as I am that his proposal is impracticable, the Acting Chief Protector, in his report, repeats his suggestion of making Melville Island a reserve for half-castes and native prisoners. I dealt with this proposal on page 9 of my Annual Report for 1921-22, under the heading Police, and it is therefore unnecessary to go into the matter again here.

The tractor mentioned by the Acting Chief Protector has since the date of his report been brought in by means of a team of horses and placed under shelter at the Daly River Station. Attempts to bring it in under its own power failed.

The Regulations under the Aborigines Ordinance stand in need of amendment in other respects beside those indicated by the Acting Chief Protector.

A deputation of pastoralists waited on me and drew attention to this, and I am giving it early attention, and all the suggestions in the Acting Chief Protector's Report will be fully considered and acted upon if it is found necessary to do so.

#### AGRICULTURE AND BOTANIC GARDENS.

The Superintendent of Agriculture and Curator of the Botanic Gardens again supplies an interesting, valuable, and, I think it may safely be said, an encouraging report. After indicating possibilities in regard to such products as mangoes and coconuts, he passes to a description of the inception of cotton growing and deals with the subject of cotton pests and the effect of their presence on the budding industry, and expresses his regret that the establishment of a Cotton Experimental Station on the Katherine River, as suggested by him and strongly recommended by me, was not approved.

He then reports on the excellent prospects for peanut-growing and as he has, I know, made the facts detailed by him widely known, it is strange that in only two places, namely at Adelaide River by Mr. Verburg, and at Daly River by Messrs. Parry and Hill, has the cultivation of this very payable crop been taken in hand. Mr. Allen, however, informs me that more persons are inquiring about peanuts, and as there is plenty of land suitable for growing them, it seems quite probable that, when the profitable results reached by the pioneer growers begin to be generally appreciated, important developments will take place.

I would ask for full consideration of the Superintendent of Agriculture's recommendation as to the resumption of the growing of citrus trees in the Territory. I need not descant upon the benefit to the community of a supply of citrus fruits in a climate like this, but I desire to point out that such fruits grow very well here, and that at the time the destruction of citrus trees was ordered the beginning of an export trade to West Australian ports was in evidence. The report on this subject referred to by the Superintendent was forwarded to you on 3rd July, 1923.

#### CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER.

The report of this officer deals comprehensively with the general health, sanitation, and vital statistics of the Territory. It will be seen that, from a health point of view, the year has been a very favorable one and that there has been a marked absence of malaria and other serious diseases of an infectious nature, and the death rate has been the lowest on record. A feature of the vital statistics which gives rise to serious reflection is that while the total white population only exceeds the total coloured population (excluding aborigines) by 1,206, the coloured birth rate exceeds the white by 27 per 1,000, or in other words the natural increase of the coloured people is three times that of the white.

ment Store was concerned did not occur at all. Break-ages, also, were at their lowest on record. The only claims for non-delivery were for ullages in transit.

Freight charges from southern ports to Darwin were subject to alteration. In July, 1922, the rate was 80s. per ton for general cargo, and 120s. per ton for special or dangerous cargo. In September of the same year these charges were reduced to 75s. and 112s. 6d. per ton respectively. A further decrease took place in June of this year when freights were lowered to 70s. and 105s. per ton respectively.

Local stevedoring and other charges remained stationary at 18s. 3d. per ton, and this applies also to railage charges from Darwin to the Government Store's siding at 6s. per ton.

The supply of gelignite during the year fell short of anticipations. Tin experienced, at one time, a rise in price, and in consequence this office received many inquiries in connexion with the sale of explosives, of which there was none on hand. But it was known that the brigantine *Rachel Cohen* had 150 cases of explosives on board for Darwin, and the arrival of the said brigantine in this port was looked forward to eagerly. Should in the near future the price of tin justify the working of our mines, 150 cases of gelignite will find a sale all too readily. There is little probability that the Eastern steamers will ever carry explosives for us. But there may be a chance that small quantities of gelignite, say, ten case lots, may be taken on board for Darwin by steamers coming to this port from the West. Inquiries will be set on foot in regard to this at an opportune time.

During the year 1922-23 the Stores Branch purchased goods on account of its Stores Trust Fund for	£4,356	
And placed orders and handled goods for "direct supply" to the Departments for	4,701	£9,057
Total sales from stock amounted to	£4,899	
Adding "direct supply" sales as above	4,701	9,600
Total turnover for 1922-23		£18,657
Value of stock 30th June, 1923	£6,156	
For the same period liquor was purchased and landed for	£20,097	
And liquor sales for the year amounted to	18,728	
Resulting in a turnover for 1922-23		£38,825
Liquor stocks on hand 30th June, 1923	£5,275	
The grand total of the yearly turnover for both stores combined was	18,567	38,825
		£57,392

K. NYLANDER,  
Government Storekeeper.

## REPORT ON BATHURST ISLAND MISSION, JUNE, 1922—JUNE, 1923.

### IN GENERAL.

The *personnel* of the Mission consists of one priest, one brother, and two nuns. There are also two Manilla men with their wives (half-castes). The Manilla men take care of the Mission lugger, helped by a native crew.

During the above-mentioned year, the work among the natives has been progressing steadily. The natives come to the station for work, as this is the only means they have of securing flour and tobacco. The principle laid down for them is no work no pay, and they are well aware of this fact. After a few months at the station they feel the call of the bush, and must go away for a time. They have also other attractions in the bush, such as a corroboree or a tribal fight. Their supply of tobacco soon runs short, and they return to the station for another period. They are continually on the go thus to and from the bush. On the average there are generally about 50 natives camped in the vicinity of the Mission Station. At times there are over 100. During the wet season most of them come in from the bush as it is difficult to procure their native foods.

Twenty of the young men are married to young women that have been bought from the old men. Most of these young women spent some time with the sisters before their marriage, where they received a little schooling and were taught washing, &c. This is the only way the young men have a chance of marriage, as otherwise the old men keep all the women for themselves. These young couples regard the station as their home. They spend most of their time there, and thus there is a better chance of training their children.

Of course, as yet the natives are far from perfect. They are good and trustworthy in many ways, but for one thing they find it difficult to resist the temptation to steal. When they are caught doing anything wrong they are sent bush, and must remain away until permission is given by the one in charge for them to return. With regard to work they require constant supervision, or otherwise they will do little. If they

are given a task to perform they must finish it in a satisfactory manner before they are given their food or tobacco.

*Cultivation.*—Whilst at the station the natives are employed mostly in agricultural work. During the dry season they prepare the ground for planting, and during the wet they are kept busy weeding, &c. There are about 50 acres under cultivation, bananas, coconuts, pine apples, paw paws, mangoes, sweet potatoes, yams, maize, arrowroot, peanuts, Kaffir corn, and vegetables are also cultivated. Last year over  $\frac{1}{2}$  a ton of peanuts were grown, and sold in Sydney at the rate of £41 a ton. There was about  $\frac{1}{2}$  an acre under cotton, but this was a failure as the insects destroyed the plants. All the other plants do well, and for a few months of the year there are enough sweet potatoes and yams to feed the natives around the station.

*Saw-mill.*—There is also a saw-mill on the station run by natives under the supervision of the one in charge of the Mission. The natives do all the work at the mill. During the last twelve months the mill has not been worked constantly, as there has been little demand for timber. Still all the timber is cut that is required for buildings and repairs on the station.

The natives do other odd jobs, such as fencing, building sheds, bringing logs from the bush for the mill, repairing the fish traps, &c. They made a road through the bush for about 6 miles. One of the Manilla men, with the help of the natives, built seven dingheys that were sold in Darwin.

*Stock.*—There are twenty head of cattle on the station, 100 goats, nine sheep, 25 pigs, and 150 fowls. All the stock do splendidly except the sheep. The sheep keep in good condition, but are slow to increase.

*School.*—The nuns are in charge of the school. On the average 25 children attend the school, where they learn reading, writing, arithmetic, and receive religious instruction. Most of them are bright, and take an interest in their lessons. They are not as regular in attendance as white children. For when their parents

go bush they take their children with them. There are also ten half-caste children from the mainland on the station, and these are under the constant care of the mission staff.

*Health.*—The health of the natives in general is good. Those with ailments, such as yaws, cuts, burns, &c., come to the station for medicine and are treated. A number of cases of hookworm were discovered during the year, and were treated. A few months ago an epidemic of influenza broke out and carried off a few

victims in the bush. Those around the station received the attention and treatment required, and recovered.

*Conclusion.*—The work continues slowly. The resources of the Mission are small. Besides the subsidy from the Government of £250 a year, very little help has reached the station. But later on, as the resources increase, more will be able to be done for the natives.

(Sgd.)

W. M. HENSCHKE,

The Presbytery, Darwin.

## REPORT ON GOULBURN ISLAND MISSION, 30TH JUNE, 1923.

Six months of the past twelve were spent away from the station by the writer, who was sent south on furlough. During that time a relief party was sent to the island, to remove Sister Matthews, who, rumour would have, was dangerously menaced by the natives.

*Aborigines.*—During the past three years no anxious moments have been caused by any sign of treachery on the part of our natives. Constantly natives visit us from the mainland, and inland; frequently they remain indefinitely on the island, and ready industrial employment awaits them.

*Children.*—Under the immediate charge of the Missionary Sister there are at present:—

Girls	...	...	...	...	19
Boys	...	...	...	...	24

These receive both religious and secular training.

### HALF-CASTES.

Child's Name.	Mother's European Name.	Mother's Native Name.
Betty Vickmann ..	Mrs. Vickmann ..	Narna
Wilnie Vickmann ..	Mrs. Vickmann ..	Narna
Morang Morang ..	.. ..	Minoga
Katie ..	.. ..	Marmalte
Marjorie ..	.. ..	Marmalte
Gunimgumber ..	.. ..	Goragorata
Minoga ..	.. ..	Magagulla

N.B.—During the year Alice Vickmann was handed over to the Darwin Protectorate.

Walgera and Katteranyan, two natives, came to the island about two months ago. The arrival of Constable Woods to arrest them surprised us. They were escaped prisoners. Their conduct here was conspicuously good.

(Signed)

LOUIS D. KEIPERT.