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**SOUTH AUSTRALIA.**

**GOVERNMENT RESIDENT'S REPORT ON THE NORTHERN  
TERRITORY, 1907.**

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**GOVERNMENT RESIDENT'S REPORT on the NORTHERN TERRITORY for the  
YEAR 1907.**

Northern Territory of South Australia : Office of the Government Resident,  
Palmerston, February 29th, 1908.

Sir—I have the honor to submit my report upon the affairs of the Northern Territory for the year 1907.

The Territory has been in various ways brought prominently before the notice of the Australian public during the year, and not the least important were the visits paid to the country by His Excellency the Governor-General and by Members of the Commonwealth Parliament. The visits extended over a period of two months—from May 8th till July 8th. His Excellency and party arrived on the 1st and left on the 28th June, and during his stay travelled to the Daly River and the Adelaide River, and visited the up-country townships and some mining centres. The visitors from the Commonwealth Legislature were 23 in number, arriving in four parties, some of which were again divided owing to the exigencies of transport. Besides the country along the railway line, which was inspected by all, one or more of the various parties visited and inspected the districts on the Victoria, Daly, Douglas, Adelaide, and Katherine rivers, and several of the mining fields.

**POPULATION.**

Under this heading statistics still show a general falling off in the aggregate. The population at the end of 1907 numbered 3,166, of all nationalities (exclusive of aborigines), as against 3,208 at the end of 1906, or a decrease of 42. Each succeeding year continues to make a record in a decreased population. The decrease, however, on this occasion is attributable to nationalities other than Europeans. The excess of departures over arrivals of those nationalities numbered 77. The excess last year was 117. The European population at the end of 1907 was 1,110, as against 1,075 at the same period of 1906, or an increase of 35 in favor of the year now passed. On only three occasions in 27 years has the European population exceeded the present number.

Under existing legislation the decrease in nationalities other than European is natural, and will continue. The balance on the side of gain in Europeans, though small, is appreciable. But it is to be regretted that of the 454 European arrivals in 1907 the country did not succeed in retaining more than 35. A large proportion of those arriving were, of course, permanent settlers returning after short absences; but many were strangers to the country, and were doubtless led to visit it on the mere chance of something turning up to occupy their energies, and had no settled or determined object in view. This is to some extent borne out by the fact that many applications by strangers were made locally for Government employment, which in many instances it was impossible to give, although more public works were in progress towards the latter end of the year than had been the case for many years previously, and some of them were put in hand—though the season was otherwise inopportune—so as to absorb and give employment to the labor which was offering.

Intending settlers, with whatever object in view, would be well advised if they timed their arrival here during the dry season. Opportunities of engagement—though, unfortunately, few at any time—are then more frequent, and it is a more convenient time for independent action, as the country is in a more favorable state for prospecting and land selection.

**PASTORAL.**

Considerable repairs are required during this year to the Katherine River Crossing. The road from Mount Todd to Katherine is in a bad state, and would cost a great deal to repair. It is proposed, therefore, as soon as rains permit, to cut another road which will, at the same time, be cheaper and will lessen the distance by several miles.

Of the more important works undertaken during the year were the construction of a high-water landing at the West Arm and the dismantling of two iron houses at Yam Creek—one for erection at Pine Creek as a local court and warden's office and quarters, the other for erection at the Palmerston Hospital to supply much-needed additional accommodation. Tenders for these or kindred works were called for, but on examination were found to be excessive. The work has, therefore, been carried on by day labor.

The need is felt of an experienced man to compute estimates for and supervise the construction of all public works. This duty has been performed in recent years by the Chief Warden, to the great disadvantage of the proper and prompt performance of his other duties. What is wanted is a practical and experienced working contractor, with a gift of managing and instructing workmen.

In the dry season of the year unskilled European labor was at times scarce, but directly the wet set in there was an over-supply.

Skilled European labor has been at most times difficult to obtain, the reason no doubt being that there is not sufficient work to provide continuous employment.

#### ABORIGINES.

The urgent necessity for legislation providing for the protection of aborigines is a matter which still continually forces itself into notice. The Northern Territory is now the only portion of Australia having a considerable native population which possesses no legislation worthy of a moment's consideration. Time and again during recent years it has been found necessary to take some action for which no authority existed to back it. Frequent though such occasions were, they were few compared with the instances calling for action which, however, could not be taken for the reason that it could not be persisted in.

Year after year the decrease in numbers of aborigines in the settled districts is observable, and particularly is this so in the numbers of young full-blooded native children. In addition to disease (unfortunately rife among these people), which is one of the causes for decrease, this result is further contributed to by the fact of so many lubras permanently leaving their camps and living openly with men of nationalities other than their own. The women, as a rule, are chosen because they are young and of superior physique to others of their tribe. Their absence, therefore, naturally tends to hasten the race extinction, which is slowly but certainly approaching.

It is utterly impossible in the present state of the law to interfere in these cases, unless the lubra is under the age of consent. Invariably no evidence of age is procurable. In a recent case, had it been allowed to proceed, the medical evidence would have been that the girl was over the age of 17 years. It was, therefore, deemed advisable to enter a *nolle prosequi* at the Circuit Court held on December 16th last. It is a singular circumstance that within the succeeding fortnight no less than three applications were made to the District Registrar of Marriages by Malays—one of them the defendant in the case mentioned—to marry them to aboriginal women. The circumstances of the cases have already been placed before the Hon. the Minister, together with my reasons for advising the intervention of the Protector of Aborigines.

The Protector of Aborigines proceeded last year along the coast to the eastward as far as Borroloola, with the object of inquiring into the present condition of the aborigines, and his report has been forwarded to the Hon. the Minister.

In August, M.C. Murphy, stationed at Daly River smelter, patrolled the country from that locality to Billawock and Woolabannah Hills, Daly Mouth, Cape Ford, Cape Dombey, Barthelemy Hills, Yeddar, Mount Goodwin, Macadam Range, along the Fitzmaurice River, and then northward to Fletcher's Gully, and thence to his station—a total distance of 534 miles. In his report he states:—

During my patrol I saw the following different tribes of aborigines, namely:—Maranunga, Mullac-Mullac, Ponga-Ponga, Wargite, Amey, Mimba, Berrinkin, Cudjeroo, Maramanidjy, Angomerry, and Wangaman; the total being from 1,000 to 1,200. I kept a night watch from the time I left Cape Ford until I arrived at Fletcher's Gully, and, with the exception of the Cudjeroo tribe, they did not appear to be hostile or frightened. From the 18th, after leaving opposite Port Keats, until the day before I arrived at the Fitzmaurice, I saw 200 to 300 natives in the distance, generally running away; and as I frequently had to retrace my tracks, on account of hills and saltwater arms, I could see the tracks of numbers of natives walking over mine, as if trying to obliterate them, and they had generally lighted fires on my tracks about an hour after I had passed. This, I believe, was only in the Cudjeroo country. The tobacco, matches, and pipes forwarded I distributed to the natives along the coast, also to the Wangamans.

#### THE FEDERAL.

The Government steamer *Federal* arrived in Port Darwin on May 30th, 1907, and the work upon which she was engaged for the remainder of the year is set out in the report of Captain H. C. Edwards, in the Appendices (page 50.)

*Afforestation Experiment.*—As instructed by you, steps are being taken to plant up a small block in the garden with cypress pine and tecoma wood—two of the best of our native woods. Valuable data as to the rate of growth, &c., will thus be acquired, which may be useful in after years.

I had planted a few cypress pine trees in the nursery several years ago, and the rate of growth, so far, has been very encouraging.

The different starch, fibre, and oil-yielding plants represented in our collection are, as usual, being grown in small plots this season, and a number of other valuable plants are being tested in the nursery.

A collection of fibres, cottons, &c., was got together during the year for the Anglo-French Exhibition in London, but owing to many of the crops being in a growing state the collection was not as complete as I could have wished.

I have, &c.,

NICHOLAS HOLTZE, Curator.

His Honor Mr. Justice Herbert, Government Resident, Palmerston.

#### CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

Palmerston, January 25th, 1908.

Sir—I have the honor to submit to you the annual report for 1907 on the various departments under my charge.

##### HOSPITAL.

Number of patients in hospital January 1st, 1907, 17. Admitted for year ending December 31st, 1907: Europeans, 80; Chinese, 10; aboriginals, 15; Japanese, 4; Phillipinos, 4; Fijian, 1; Kanaka, 1 (115); total, 132. Average daily number in hospital, 17.58; least number in hospital, 10; greatest number in hospital, 24; deaths, 16.

*Causes of Death.*—Meningitis, pneumonia (2), tubercular laryngitis, dysentery, gout, cancer (3), abdominal injury, fibroid phthisis, alcoholism (2), uræmia, syphilitic laryngitis, peritonitis.

*Diseases Treated.*—Cancer, injured hands, malaria, heart disease, tubercular laryngitis, wounds, syphilis, hydrocele, pterygium, neurasthenia, hæmorrhoids, dysentery, acute pneumonia, abdominal injuries, fistula ani, synovitis, erysipelas, ulcerated legs, hernias, bronchitis, angina pectoris, hepatic hydatid, varicose veins, fractured femur, rodent ulcer, talipes, fibroid phthisis, phimosis, tumors, acute appendicitis, uræmia, pleurisy, ascites, iritis, periostitis, orchitis, compound fractures of the tibia and humerus, venereal disease, degenerated keloid, beri beri, cystic papilloma, abscess, exophthalmic goitre, sciatica, trachoma, alcoholism, perforating ulcer of foot, gout, fractured ribs.

*Operations Performed.*—Amputation of arm, 1; hydrocele, 1; talipes equinus, 1; rodent ulcer, 2; varicose veins, 1; amputation of leg, 1; tumors, 3; hæmorrhoids, 2; ulcerating and pseudo granulomata, 25; circumcision and removal of inguinal glands, 11; hydatids, 1; acute appendicitis, 1; exploratory laparotomy, 1. General anæsthesia was used 13 times; local anæsthesia 31 times.

*Results.*—Discharged cured, 91; relieved, 4; remaining in hospital December 31st, 1907, 21; died, 16; total, 132.

Of the 16 fatal cases eight showed evidence of alcoholic and malarial complications. There was one death after operation (exploratory) for abdominal injuries.

##### ABORIGINES.

Many natives have received medical or surgical treatment during the year, and matters connected with their present condition I have reviewed in a separate report.

##### GAOL.

Forty-one prisoners were treated during the year for the following diseases:—Chronic constipation, strained muscles, sciatica, chronic rheumatism, injuries to feet, morphinism, headache, malaria, dyspepsia, ringworm, neuralgia, bronchitis, neurasthenia, lumbago, asthma. There were no deaths.

The aboriginal prisoners suffered more from symptoms of weakness and pains in their limbs than the Europeans. This, I believe, is due to the fact that although they do equally as hard work, their diet is considerably less. They get no rice, and only half the quantity of meat and potatoes that is supplied to the Europeans.

I have, &c.,

CECIL L. STRANGMAN.

His Honor Mr. Justice Herbert, Government Resident, Palmerston.

#### GAOL AND LABOR PRISON.

Palmerston Gaol and Labor Prison, Fannie Bay, January 10th, 1908.

Sir—I have the honor respectfully to submit my report for the year ended December 31st, 1907.

A return showing the number of prisoners brought to gaol and discharged, also a return showing the amount of the prisoners' earnings (attached herewith).

Thirty prisoners were brought to gaol and 36 were discharged, the average number per day being 16 and a fraction. Twenty-two was the largest number imprisoned at one time, and 12 the smallest number at one time during the year. The health of the prisoners has been good, no deaths having occurred; and their