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South Aust: Aborigines Dept.

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REPORT FROM PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES, For Six Months ended June 30, 1867.

Aborigines Office, Adelaide, 1st July, 1867.

Sir—I have the honor to forward, for the information of His Excellency the Governor-in-Chief, my report for the six months ending 30th June, 1867.

SOUTH-EASTERN DISTRICT.

Point Macleay.—The following is extracted from Mr. Taplin's report of 17th May:—"As regards the general state and prospects of this mission, I can report favorably. There are now twenty-nine natives under instruction in our school-house; eighteen of these are children, and the rest are youths who work all day at farm work and receive instruction in the evening. Our Sabbath congregations are regular and attentive, and average between forty and fifty individuals. I am also aware that several young men and women who have left this station are exerting a good influence among the natives where they reside. I heard of one instance, where a native of ours was received into communion with a Christian church in the neighborhood where he is employed. Of course, there are some who resist our efforts for their good; it would, indeed, be remarkable if we were invariably successful in our efforts to influence for good the moral character of the natives.

"Our farm has turned out very well, and is likely to continue to do so. I look to it as a means of making this station self-supporting in the course of time, and thus enabling the Aborigines Friends Association to transfer the funds now expended here to some other mission among the aborigines. I also regard our farm as an important agency for civilizing the natives, by giving them employment and cultivating habits of industry, forethought, and economy among them. The next harvest we shall have above 100 acres of wheat, and also some few acres of hay, and our small flock of sheep is likely to do well and be remunerative.

"I have also to report that for the last four months there has been a great dearth of employment for natives. White labor is so easily obtained, and many farmers have such an aversion to employing natives that almost every means of employment has been shut against them. If it had not have been for this station, I think much distress would have prevailed amongst them. I wish we could employ more than we do. I often have to turn people away who seek for work. Many of the young men are intelligent laborers, and always get a job of work if they can, with a chance of being paid. Unfortunately they often get cheated. I have had cases brought under my notice where the natives had been cheated out of their hard-earned wages with heartless impudence. In one instance, a man got three strong women to clean his wheat; they worked hard for six weeks, and at the end of the time he put them off with sixpence per day, and cheated them out of part of that. I wished to summons the fellow, but found that there was no chance of gaining the cause against him. And it is unfortunately the case, that white people of this class generally manage, by their superior acuteness, to keep out of the reach of the law when they cheat the natives. Of course, such cheating has very serious results; it provokes the natives to retaliate, and makes them care nothing about work.

"The general health of the natives has been tolerably good. I have about the usual proportion of cases of sickness, but I fancy I perceive a decrease—gradual it is true—in the number of births. This arises, in some instances, from prostitution. I am well aware that the temptations held out by white men to the native girls are constant and attractive,

especially to those who can earn so little money—and also especially as held out by the superior race to the inferior. I notice that decent, chaste women among the natives almost invariably have large families. I know of three who have had three children each in five years. I cannot think what is to be done with the bad white men who corrupt the native girls. I know of one now, who is flagrantly addicted to it, but it appears there is no law which will reach him.

"Allow me to add that I do not wish it to be understood, that all the native women are addicted to prostitution, such is not the case, many of them are well-conducted.

"There has been no fight among the natives for three years.

"I am sorry to say I have heard of several cases of drunkenness, in the neighborhood of Meningie, within the last few months, and I think that many of the drunken natives are quite as blameable as the whites, and deserve to be punished. Nothing would so much stop drunkenness among the natives as to punish them sharply for getting drunk.

"A large number of natives have been very successfully engaged in fishing in order to supply their own wants, and also to sell to the white people. I trust this means of getting a livelihood will become increasingly valuable to them."

Tarpeena.—Ranger Egan reports, on the 13th May:—"All the aborigines located at the depôt at Tarpeena left for MacDonnell Bay; some of them had never seen the Bay and were very desirous to visit it. They subsequently returned to the Mount when they met many of their friends, some from the Glenelg, and they held a corroboree.

"The various depôts being at convenient distances from each other in this district they can indulge in their migratory habits, and there is no danger of their going short of food. I am of opinion that there is a great improvement in them during the past six months, there is less drunkenness and less fighting, their general conduct is comparatively as good as the generality of the laboring class of white men.

"The Native School, conducted by Mrs. Smith, is a great improvement; and I do not see what more the Government can do for the aborigines in this district."

Guichen Bay.—Police Trooper Phelan reports, under date 11th April:—"Most of the females in this district have come to Guichen Bay for their blankets. They seem healthy, with the exception of two or three women, who are very delicate from disease of the chest."

Wallaroo.—Corporal B. C. Besley reports, on the 9th May:—"The natives generally are very healthy. I have issued blankets as far as they would go to the women, and a few to the men—about 40 more are required. They are now leaving for the other townships. I have received no complaints during the month against them."

NORTHERN DISTRICT.

Sub-Protector Buttfield reports, on the 13th May:—"Having travelled over a large proportion of my district and mingled with the natives, I am enabled to speak from personal observation of their condition; and thus the subjects of my charge have come to know me personally, and to understand the relation I sustain to them. The aborigines gratefully appreciate the efforts of the Government to minister to their necessities, protect them in their rights, and to enlighten them in their own duties and obligations towards the settlers, through the medium of 'blackfellow master' all about.

"During the last six months I visited officially the following places, viz.:—Ooriparinna, Appallina, Nuccaleena,

Bobmooneywest, Windy Creek, Patsy's Springs, Fink's Creek, Mount Serle, Umberatana, Yerelina, Mount Freeling, Blanchewater, Tooncatchen, Mannwalkanina, Coldrinna, Lake Hope (Mount Serle and the five last-named places twice), Wilpena, Arkaba, Wana ka, Kanyaka, Stirling, Port Augusta, Beautiful Valley, Mount Remarkable, Willowie, Coonatto, Yanure, Mattawarangalla, Hollowilliena, Warcowie, Angorichina, Wirribinma, Wirroalpa, Arrowie, Warreata, Koppromaran, Killalpaninna, Lake Gregory, and many other adjacent or intermediate places. I have thus gone over some 2,000 miles, seeking in every way in my power to discharge the duties of my office, so as to secure the best results.

"There has been a great amount of sickness (but little mortality) among the aborigines. I am happy to report a great improvement in this respect. I always carry in my vehicle medicines and medical comforts, and thus have been enabled to render needful assistance to many poor sufferers.

"I feel myself justified in stating the general health of the aborigines to be good. The timely arrival at the several depôts of blankets and other clothing, will no doubt contribute alike to the health and comfort of the aborigines.

"The provisions are, I believe, distributed with care and discrimination by the issuers.

"The almost total absence of native animals, and the failure of other resources, native and extraneous, have placed a very large number of aborigines in most trying circumstances, and dependent upon the generosity of the Government.

"Notwithstanding the hard times the general conduct of the aborigines has been such as to excite sympathy, surprize, and gratification. They are for the most part, patient, peaceable, and well-disposed—occasionally an unprotected hut is robbed of stores; and there have been one or two instances of crimes of a more aggravated nature.

"There are now 17 depôts judiciously distributed over my district as follows:—

"East and North-East.—Melrose, Mattawarangalla, Arrowie, Boolcoomata, and Bimbourie.

"North.—Port Augusta, Arkaba, Wilpena, Blinman, Umberatana, Yudanamutana, and Mount Freeling.

"West and North West.—Franklin Harbor, Ogilvie's, Mount Eyre, Wintalatingaro, and Mount Deception.

"I think it will not be necessary to augment materially the number of regular depôts.

"I have not visited the west and north-west portion of my district during the past six months, I was preparing to do so when intelligence reached me of the menacing conduct of the natives at Koppromaran, and I felt it to be my duty to accompany the detachment of troopers sent there by the Government instead."

The natives west of Port Lincoln have suffered very much during the past six months from an attack of a disease said to be small pox. The late Dr. Lawson, of Port Lincoln, and Dr. Gething, of Port Adelaide, were sent, by the direction of the Government, to visit and prescribe for these people, and it is gratifying to state that their efforts and advice, in addition to the care and considerate attention, the issuers of stores at the various western depôts have been instrumental in stopping a disease that threatened destruction to the native population of that portion of the province.

Since my term of office, extending to a period of six months, I have travelled a distance of 2,355 miles, in making official visits to the following places, viz.:—Milang, Point Macleay, Waterside, Wellington, Goolwa, Port Elliot, Victor Harbor, Long Island, Meningie, McGrath's Flat, Lacepede Bay, Narracoorte, Penola, Mount Gambier, Tarpeena, Mount Burr, Merne, Port Lincoln, Port Augusta, Beautiful Valley, Mount Remarkable, Stockport, Blanchetown, Overland Corner, Chowilla, Clarendon, and Rapid Bay, for the purpose of inspecting the various depôts, and ascertaining the condition of, and rendering all the assistance I could to the aborigines who resort to those places of relief when occasion requires it.

There are fifty-eight depôts in the Colony, at which stores and medicines of various kinds are kept for distribution among the aborigines, so that the wants of these people during times of scarcity of food and sickness are met, and whenever it is possible and necessary, medical practitioners are employed to attend upon the sick.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

E. B. SCOTT, Acting Protector of Aborigines.

To the Hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands.

Re. Native School at Wattleborough

opened in April 1844
under superintendence of Mr Smith - formerly
draftsman in Land office -

Messrs Abbott, Forster & Keckwick
of the Methodist Church conducted a
Native Sunday School at Wattleborough ---
premises purchased by them for the purpose,
& had from 60 to 90 Native children under
instruction there,

Children divided into 5 classes -
2 classes able to read tolerably well &
sing Hymns in English -

From Govt. Gazette report. Decr 1844