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Comments received to date from the Government Resident.

In reply to this Department's memorandum of the 28th September, the Government Resident reported as follows:-

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- (a) Since taking up duty in March 1927, there have been continuous complaints from white settlers as to the depredations of the blacks. The police have been constantly investigating these complaints, but owing to the inadequate police force and the extent of country to be patrolled, complaints that should have been investigated promptly have had to stand over.
 - (b) The result of the delay has been accepted by the aboriginals as a sign of weakness on the part of the administration of law and order, and consequently the aboriginals have adopted a cheeky attitude towards the whites and have openly boasted of their depredations, and have made threats to wipe out the white settlers in isolated portions of the Territory.
 - (c) In ordinary cases of cattle killing by what may be termed "civilized natives" arrests have been effected without loss of life, because the civilized native submits to capture and recognises the authority of the Administration.
 - (d) The "Myall" or uncivilized aboriginal, however, resents the intrusion of the white, whether he be policeman or settler, resists any attempt at capture, and has very little idea of the deadly effect of firearms. His attitude, when called upon to surrender, is one of immediate hostility, and the police have, therefore, to safeguard their own lives as well as those of the other members of the party.
 - (e) The uncivilized aboriginal has no respect for human life.
 - (f) The recent happenings are only a repetition of history as regards the colonization and development of lands formerly held by colored races.
 - (g) The police in the Territory, as well as the white settlers, are anxious to avoid bloodshed, so far as the native is concerned. In every instance that has come under the Government Resident's notice, the attacks by the blacks have been unprovoked, their one object being to kill and loot.
 - (h) If the Government throws open country in the isolated interior, it is incumbent upon the local authorities to afford the necessary protection against such unprovoked attacks as the white settlers in Central Australia have been subjected to.
 - (i) In the ^{opinion} of old residents, trouble has been brewing for some time, and the safety of the white man could only be assured by drastic action on the part of the authorities.
 - (j) The result of the recent action by the police will have the right effect upon the aboriginals, and while regretting the necessity for extreme measures, the fact remains that the aboriginals brought the trouble on themselves.

/(k)

The Government Resident replied to this request for information on the 25th October (see lower).

On the 2nd November, 1928, the Government Resident was asked, by telegram, to forward the Coroner's certificate dispensing with an inquest on the murder of Brookes and to advise whether the deaths of the aboriginals had been reported to the Coroner and, if so, what action was taken by the Coroner.

On the 5th November a memorandum was sent to the Government Resident asking him to expedite the supply of information already requested. He was informed that information was particularly desired as to whether the killing of the 17 aboriginals by Murray's party had been reported to the Coroner and, if so, what action the Coroner took in regard thereto.

On the 9th November, 1928, the Government Resident's attention was invited to the indefinite statements contained in Constable Murray's report regarding the action taken by him to arrest the aboriginals implicated in the attack on Morton. ("A number of male natives being shot", "a number of natives were killed"). He was informed of the serious aspect of the killing of aboriginals by Government parties and of the responsibilities of the Minister and of this Department in regard to the protection and guardianship of native races in all Territories.

He was again asked to furnish full particulars as to the number of aboriginals killed, the circumstances in which they were killed, whether the killing was reported to the Coroner, and, if so, what action was taken by the Coroner in regard thereto. He was further requested to obtain, wherever possible, confirmation of the statements made by officers and persons connected with the parties responsible for the killing of aboriginals.

It was pointed out that this information was necessary to enable the Minister to decide whether the killing was justified, and also to reply to inquiries and representations made to the Department.

The Government Resident was informed that the Minister looks to him, as his representative in Central Australia, for advice and authentic information regarding all important happenings.

Information was requested as to the reasons for the apparent sudden outbreak of hostility on the part of the aboriginals, who had been peaceful for so many years.

The possibility of an investigation by a specially appointed party was pointed out to the Government Resident, and he was asked to advise what would be involved in the nature of travelling, outfit etc., to ensure that all evidence, which it is practicable to obtain, would be secured.

On the 17th November, 1928, the Government Resident was asked to obtain and furnish a report on the incidents from the Chief Protector of Aboriginals of the Territory.

Confidential inquiries have also been made as to whether, in the event of an inquiry being decided upon, a suitable person could be secured from South Australia. The name of an officer of the South Australian Service who appears to be suitable has been obtained.

Total two and a number of others killed.
One and a number of others shot (killed?).

In the report on this matter Murray commented on the statements frequently made that the aboriginals had been forced to attack white men, and that they had been driven in owing to the drying up of waters and the scarcity of food. He states that this is not correct as he had travelled thousands of miles during the past few months through the back and almost unknown country amongst the hostile blacks, and throughout the whole of the country traversed had found native food to exist in profusion and ample water. For ten days he and his party existed solely on native food.

Tilmouth's case.

As mentioned earlier in this statement, Tilmouth shot and killed an aboriginal who attempted to attack him.

Number of aboriginals shot and killed.

The number of aboriginals killed or shot by the police and others in Central Australia in connection with the foregoing cases were:-

	<u>Killed.</u>	<u>Shot, not known whether killed.</u>
Brookes' case,	17 (including 2 lubras).	
Morton's case,	2 and a number of others.	1 and a number of others.
Tilmouth's case	1	
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<u>Total</u>	20 and a number of others.	1 and a number of others..
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Action taken by this Department to date (19/11/28).

As no observations or comments were made by the Government Resident of Central Australia when forwarding Constable Murray's report regarding the shooting of aboriginals in connection with the case of the murder of Brookes, he was asked, on the 28th September, to submit a report containing his personal observations on the circumstances connected with the investigations of the murder, and in particular his own views on the actions of the police party and the results of such actions. He was also asked, at the same time, to endeavour to obtain statements from as many of the white members of the police party as possible regarding the encounters with the aboriginals and to forward them for the Minister's information.

/The Government

hostilities by throwing boomerangs and spears, and as darkness was approaching and the position appeared to be serious, Murray ordered one of his party to fire at the shield of an aboriginal. The aboriginals then attacked in earnest, and three of them were killed and three wounded. The wounded admitted having assisted in the murder of Brookes and stated that the three who were killed had also assisted. The three wounded died the following day.

6 aboriginals killed.

Ascertaining that other murderers had proceeded to Cockatoo Spring, the party proceeded to that place and located four natives, who were fast disappearing over the cliffs. The party was divided up, so as to cut off the escape of the aboriginals. Murray and one tracker got within close quarters of the natives (two males and two females). They refused to be captured and made off over the rocks. After repeatedly calling upon them to stop Murray and the tracker fired and both males were killed. The lubras stated that both males had assisted to kill Brookes and some of the latter's property was found in their possession.

2 aboriginals killed.

It was ascertained that a party of the murderers had made for the Western Australia border. Following the tracks for several days, the party came up with four males and a number of lubras and children. The aboriginals fled to the rocks and caves and two hours were spent in endeavouring to persuade them to come out, but without success. As the supply of water was inadequate for any number of horses, the party was faced with the alternatives of -

- (1) remaining and perishing the horses,
- (2) departing and leaving the aboriginals,
- (3) making a final effort to capture them.

3 aboriginals killed.

A final effort was made to capture the aboriginals. As a result three males were killed and one taken prisoner.

Total killed,
17 including
two lubras.

Morton's case.

Mounted Constable Murray also inquired into the attack by aboriginals on W. Morton.

According to his own report, the facts are as follow:-

From the inquiries which he made, he ascertained that about 14 aboriginals were implicated in the attack and one had been shot by Morton. It is not stated whether the aboriginal who was shot was killed.

? one aboriginal killed.

Morton accompanied Murray on this expedition, but otherwise the composition of the party is not stated.

The tracks of the aboriginals were followed for several hundred miles and several parties of aboriginals were encountered. A number of aboriginals were recognised by Morton as his assailants. In almost every instance the aboriginals assembled on Murray's approach and adopted a hostile attitude. They refused to part with their weapons although cautioned as to the consequences. Drastic action had to be taken and a number of male natives were shot.

A number of aboriginals shot.

On two occasions small parties of aboriginals were rounded up and Morton pointed out some culprits. Murray instructed his party to stand by their rifles. He dismounted with a view to disarming and arresting the culprits. The aboriginals resisted violently and Murray killed two with their own weapons. As the position appeared too serious, Murray called upon his assistants to fire. A number of aboriginals were killed.

2 aboriginals killed.

A number of aboriginals killed.

[26]

Tilmouth.

H. Tilmouth, of Napperby Station, reported that on the night of the 10th September, 1928, he observed two aboriginals armed with boomerangs creeping towards his camp. They were attacked by his dog. He seized his rifle and fired two shots over their heads as they were running away.

The following morning he observed tracks which indicated that a number of aboriginals had been waiting ready to attack him.

On the 16th September, 1928, Tilmouth and his native boy were obtaining water from a well. The boy called out "A black-fellow sneak up".

Tilmouth grabbed his rifle and the aboriginal rushed at him from the scrub. When within a few yards from Tilmouth the aboriginal attempted to throw a boomerang. Tilmouth fired and shot the aboriginal, killing him.

Brookes' case. *Killing of Aborigines by Police and others.*

Mounted Constable Murray was despatched to arrest the aboriginals implicated in the murder of Brookes. The following information is taken from Murray's own report:-

Murray proceeded to Coniston Station and ascertained the names of 20 adult male aboriginals who, it was alleged, were implicated in the murder. It was stated that the aboriginals were still camped near the scene of the murder and had boasted that they would kill any person who came to their camp and that they were not afraid of the police.

Murray organized a party consisting of eight - four white men, R. Stafford, J. Saxby, W. Briscoe and A. Wilson, and three aboriginals.

On 15/8/28 Murray heard excited voices in his camp and found his trackers endeavouring to arrest two powerful aboriginals who had entered the camp and were well armed with weapons. As he approached, one of the aboriginals extricated himself from the trackers' hold and attacked him, the second one then got free and came to the first one's assistance. As the position appeared to be dangerous Murray fired on one aboriginal, the bullet fracturing his skull. This aboriginal died 14 days later. The other aboriginal was secured in chains.

1 aboriginal killed.

(Note:- It is assumed that this incident happened in Murray's main camp before he departed to arrest the murderers. Query - what were the four white men doing?)

Then
On the 16/8/1928, the party proceeded to the locality where the murderers were supposed to be. On nearing the camp a guard was placed on the outskirts to prevent any aboriginals from escaping. Murray, with one tracker, entered the camp. The aboriginals immediately assembled in some low scrub. Murray dismounted to disarm an aboriginal who appeared to be the only one armed with a boomerang. The other aboriginals immediately attacked him, and he fired at them. On hearing the shots the other members of the party were quickly on the scene. Five (5) aboriginals were killed, including two lubras. A quantity of property belonging to Brookes was recovered from this camp.

5 aboriginals killed.

Ascertaining that some of the murderers were camped about 45 miles North West, the party followed their trail. On approaching the camp six male aboriginals, well armed, came out, and ordered the party to leave. They refused to surrender. For a time Murray cautioned them of the consequences that would follow should they attempt to escape. The aboriginals commenced

/hostilities.

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HOME AND TERRITORIES DEPARTMENT.

[127]

No.

MEMORANDUM:-

- (1) Attacks by aboriginals on white men, Central Australia.
- (2) Killing of aboriginals by Police and others, Central Australia.

Attacks by aboriginals on white men.

On three occasions recently aboriginals have attacked white men in Central Australia, viz, Brookes, Morton and Tilmouth.

Brookes.

On or about 7th August, 1928, Frederick Brookes, an elderly prospector, was murdered by aboriginals near Coniston Station, about 150 miles from Alice Springs.

It is reported that a lubra was sent into Brookes' camp to ask for food. Awaiting a favorable opportunity, she grappled with Brookes and called to the aboriginals. The latter rushed upon Brookes and murdered him with boomerangs, nulla nullas and other weapons. It is stated that the number of aboriginals in the party was 50.

The aboriginals buried Brookes' body in a rabbit burrow.

It is alleged that the aboriginals came from the West with the intention of attacking and robbing a settler named Stafford. When nearing Stafford's station, they killed one of his bullocks and were seen carrying the meat away by Brookes. It is thought that Brookes was murdered to prevent him from giving warning to Stafford and reporting to him the killing of the bullock.

In the Adelaide Register of the 14th August, 1928, Dr. Basedow is reported to have said that the aboriginals responsible for the killing of Brookes were strangers to the district. They were known as the Wonga Pitcha and the Pitunda tribes and came from somewhere near the Western Australia border. They had a bad reputation and had previously, on two occasions, attacked white men, Mr. Ernest Giles and Mr. F.R. George. The latter was attacked in 1906.

Morton.

W. Morton, a settler in Central Australia, stated that on the 27th August, 1928, he left his main camp to go to a waterhole, 27 miles away, where he had some cattle running. On arrival at the waterhole he found a large number of aboriginals camped there. Being suspicious of the actions of these aboriginals, he watered the horses and proceeded to a spot about a mile away to camp. In the morning three aboriginals came to his camp and asked for tobacco and meat. As he was handing some meat to them, one slipped behind him and pinned his arms and the other two attacked him. Other aboriginals were noticed rushing out of the ti-tree to assist in the attack. He fought them off, after receiving severe wounds, until he reached his swag in which he kept his revolver. By this time he was surrounded by aboriginals and was struck several heavy blows. He secured his revolver and fired several shots. The aboriginals then made off. In a dazed condition he reached his main camp from which he was unable to move for a week. He eventually reached Ti-tree Well where he received medical attention from the Inland Mission.

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STATEMENT "D".

Comments received from Government Resident.

- (a) Since taking up duty in March, 1927, there have been continuous complaints from white settlers as to the depredations of the blacks. The police have been constantly investigating these complaints, but owing to the inadequate police force and the extent of country to be patrolled, complaints that should have been investigated promptly have had to stand over.
- (b) The result of the delay has been accepted by the aboriginals as a sign of weakness on the part of the administration of law and order, and consequently the aboriginals have adopted a cheeky attitude towards the whites and have openly boasted of their depredations, and have made threats to wipe out the white settlers in isolated portions of the Territory.
- (c) In ordinary cases of cattle killing by what may be termed "civilized natives" arrests have been effected without loss of life, because the civilized native submits to capture and recognises the authority of the Administration.
- (d) The "Myall" or uncivilized aboriginal, however, resents the intrusion of the white, whether he be policeman or settler, resists any attempt at capture, and has very little idea of the deadly effect of firearms. His attitude, when called upon to surrender, is one of immediate hostility, and the police have, therefore, to safeguard their own lives as well as those of the other members of the party.
- (e) The uncivilized aboriginal has no respect for human life.
- (f) The recent happenings are only a repetition of history as regards the colonization and development of lands formerly held by colored races.
- (g) The police in the Territory, as well as the white settlers are anxious to avoid bloodshed, so far as the native is concerned. In every instance that has come under the Government Resident's notice, the attacks by the blacks have been unprovoked, their one object being to kill and loot.
- (h) If the Government throws open country in the isolated interior, it is incumbent upon the local authorities to afford the necessary protection against such unprovoked attacks as the white settlers in Central Australia have been subjected to.
- (i) In the opinion of old residents, trouble has been brewing for some time, and the safety of the white man could only be assured by drastic action on the part of the authorities.
- (j) The result of the recent action by the police will have the right effect upon the aboriginals, and while regretting the necessity for extreme measures, the fact remains that the aboriginals brought the trouble on themselves.
- (k) His instructions to Murray were to avoid bloodshed as much as possible, but under no circumstances to jeopardise the lives of the police party.
- (l) He would endeavour to obtain statements from each of the members of the party accompanying Murray, but it will be some weeks before he can interview them.
- (m) He has every reason to believe that Murray's reports are truthful in detail.

On the 17th November, 1928, the Government Resident was asked to obtain and furnish a report on the incidents from the Chief Protector of Aborigines of the Territory.

STATEMENT "C".

Action taken by the Department.

As no observations or comments were made by the Government Resident of Central Australia when forwarding Constable Murray's report regarding the shooting of aboriginals in connection with the case of the murder of Brookes, he was asked, on the 28th September, to submit a report containing his personal observations on the circumstances connected with the investigations of the murder, and in particular his own views on the actions of the police party and the results of such actions. He was also asked, at the same time, to endeavour to obtain statements from as many of the white members of the police party as possible regarding the encounters with the aboriginals and to forward them for the Minister's information.

The Government Resident replied to this request for information on the 25th October (see lower)

On the 2nd November, 1928, the Government Resident was asked, by telegram, to forward the Coroner's certificate dispensing with an inquest on the murder of Brookes and to advise whether the deaths of the aboriginals had been reported to the Coroner and, if so, what action was taken by the Coroner.

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On the 9th November, 1928, the Government Resident's attention was invited to the indefinite statements contained in Constable Murray's report regarding the action taken by him to arrest the aboriginals implicated in the attack on Morton. ("A number of male natives being shot", "a number of natives were killed"). He was informed of the serious aspect of the killing of aboriginals by Government parties and of the responsibilities of the Minister and of this Department in regard to the protection and guardianship of native races in all Territories.

He was again asked to furnish full particulars as to the number of aboriginals killed, the circumstances in which they were killed, whether the killing was reported to the Coroner, and, if so, what action was taken by the Coroner in regard thereto. He was further requested to obtain, wherever possible, confirmation of the statements made by officers and persons connected with the parties responsible for the killing of aboriginals.

It was pointed out that this information was necessary to enable the Minister to decide whether the killing was justified, and also to reply to inquiries and representations made to the Department.

The Government Resident was informed that the Minister looks to him, as his representative in Central Australia, for advice, and authentic information, regarding all important happenings.

Information was requested as to the reasons for the apparent sudden outbreak of hostility on the part of the aboriginals, who had been peaceful for so many years.

The possibility of an investigation by a specially appointed party was pointed out to the Government Resident, and he was asked to advise what would be involved in the nature of travelling, outfit etc., to ensure that all evidence, which it is practicable to obtain, would be secured.

/On the

STATEMENT "B".

Morton's case.

Mounted Constable Murray also inquired into the attack by aboriginals on W. Norton.

According to his own report, the facts are as follow:-

From the inquiries which he made, he ascertained that about 14 aboriginals were implicated in the attack and one had been shot by Norton. It is not stated whether the aboriginal who was shot was killed.

Norton accompanied Murray on this expedition, but otherwise the composition of the party is not stated.

The tracks of the aboriginals were followed for several hundred miles and several parties of aboriginals were encountered. A number of aboriginals were recognised by Norton as his assailants. In almost every instance the aboriginals assembled on Murray's approach and adopted a hostile attitude. They refused to part with their weapons although cautioned as to the consequences. Drastic action had to be taken and a number of male natives were shot.

On two occasions small parties of aboriginals were rounded up and Norton pointed out some culprits. Murray instructed his party to stand by their rifles. He dismounted with a view to disarming and arresting the culprits. The aboriginals resisted violently and Murray killed two with their own weapons. As the position appeared too serious, Murray called upon his assistants to fire. A number of aboriginals were killed.

In the report on this matter Murray commented on the statements frequently made that the aboriginals had been forced to attack white men, and that they had been driven in owing to the drying up of waters and the scarcity of food. He states that this is not correct as he had travelled thousands of miles during the past few months through the back and almost unknown country amongst the hostile blacks, and throughout the whole of the country traversed had found native food to exist in profusion and ample water. For ten days he and his party existed solely on native food.

A final effort was made to capture the aboriginals. As a result, three males were killed and one taken prisoner.

STATEMENT "A".

Brookes Case.

Mounted Constable Murray was despatched to arrest the aboriginals implicated in the murder of Brookes.

Murray proceeded to Coniston Station and ascertained the names of 20 adult male aboriginals who, it was alleged, were implicated in the murder. It was stated that the aboriginals were still camped near the scene of the murder and had boasted that they would kill any person who came to their camp and that they were not afraid of the police.

On 15/8/28, Murray heard excited voices in his camp and found his trackers endeavouring to arrest two powerful aboriginals who had entered the camp and were well armed with weapons. As he approached, one of the aboriginals extricated himself from the trackers' hold and attacked him, the second one then got free and came to the first one's assistance. As the position appeared to be dangerous, Murray fired on one aboriginal, the bullet fracturing his skull. This aboriginal died 14 days later. The other aboriginal was secured in chains.

On the 16/8/1928, the party proceeded to the locality where the other murderers were supposed to be. On nearing the camp, a guard was placed on the outskirts to prevent any aboriginals from escaping. Murray, with one tracker, entered the camp. The aboriginals immediately assembled in some low scrub. Murray dismounted to disarm an aboriginal who appeared to be the only one armed with a boomerang. The other aboriginals immediately attacked him, and he fired at them. On hearing the shots the other members of the party were quickly on the scene. Five (5) aboriginals were killed, including two lubras. A quantity of property belonging to Brookes was recovered from this camp.

Ascertaining that some of the murderers were camped about 45 miles North West, the party followed their trail. On approaching the camp six male aboriginals, well armed, came out, and ordered the party to leave. They refused to surrender. For a time Murray cautioned them of the consequences that would follow, should they attempt to escape. The aboriginals commenced hostilities by throwing boomerangs and spears, and as darkness was approaching and the position appeared to be serious, Murray ordered one of his party to fire at the shield of an aboriginal. The aboriginals then attacked in earnest, and three of them were killed and three wounded. The wounded admitted having assisted in the murder of Brookes and stated that the three who were killed had also assisted. The three wounded died the following day.

Ascertaining that other murderers had proceeded to Cockatoo Spring, the party proceeded to that place and located four natives, who were fast disappearing over the cliffs. The party was divided up, so as to cut off the escape of the aboriginals. Murray and one tracker got within close quarters of the natives (two males and two females). They refused to be captured and made off over the rocks. After repeatedly calling upon them to stop, Murray and the tracker fired and both males were killed. The lubras stated that both males had assisted to kill Brookes and some of the latter's property was found in their possession.

It was ascertained that a party of the murderers had made for the Western Australia border. Following the tracks for several days, the party came up with four males and a number of lubras and children. The aboriginals fled to the rocks and caves and two hours were spent in endeavouring to persuade them to come out, but without success. As the supply of water was inadequate for any number of horses, the party was faced with the alternatives of -

- (1) remaining and perishing the horses,
- (2) departing and leaving the aboriginals,
- (3) making a final effort to capture them.

/A final

The information so far available indicates that the blacks received no provocation, either in relation to the depredations on the station stock, or in attacks on the white men. There is no evidence that they were short of native food. On the contrary the police report, if accurate, completely refutes any assertion of that nature. The reports further indicate that there is little doubt that the natives who were shot in the endeavours to arrest the murderers of Brookes, were directly implicated in the murder.

A feature of the comments which have been made on the matter is that, while there have been abundant expressions of sympathy for the blacks, none has been expressed for the white man who was murdered, or the man who was terribly battered and only escaped by a miracle, or for those isolated settlers who have suffered the loss of their stock and have been living in fear of their lives.

23.11.28

A further case of an attack on a white man occurred soon after. A white settler named Merton was visiting a waterhole about 27 miles from his main camp. At the waterhole he met a number of blacks, and, being suspicious of their actions, merely watered his horses and removed a mile away to camp for the night. Next morning three aboriginals entered his camp and asked for food. While supplying one of them with a piece of meat, the other two attacked him, and he was struck heavy blows on the head. Others joined in the attack, but being a powerful young man, he managed to reach his swag in which he had a revolver. With this he fired several shots and dispersed the blacks. Although in a very weak state, he managed to reach his main camp, from which he was unable to move for a week. He was then conveyed to a medical mission at Pi-Tree Creek, where he received attention for his very serious head injuries.

A further attack was made on a white settler named Tilmouth. In this case, his native boy warned him of the approach of an aboriginal who was sneaking up behind him with a boomerang. Tilmouth seized his rifle, and, while the black was in the act of throwing a boomerang, shot him dead.

In each of the cases mentioned, there was not the slightest evidence of provocation, and the police report contains definite statements indicating that the hostility of the natives could not have been due to a shortage of food.

Following upon the killing of Brookes, a police constable was sent to endeavour to arrest the murderers. He formed a party, comprising four other white men and three aboriginals, and pursued the blacks. Following the usual practice they had split up into several parties. These parties were tracked and there were four separate encounters, resulting in the shooting of seventeen aboriginals, including two lubras, and the arrest of two. In the pursuit of the blacks, the police constable travelled over 846 miles, and, in the course of his movements, approached closely to the West Australian border.

The reports state that, at the site of each encounter, articles belonging to the murdered man Brookes were found in possession of the aborigines.

Statement marked "A", attached, gives details of the various encounters, and the circumstances of the shooting. Generally, it will be noted that the police report asserts that the blacks refused to surrender, showed a fighting spirit, and, in the circumstances, there were only two courses, either to allow them to escape or to shoot.

The same constable, at the conclusion of the expedition in Brookes' case, was despatched to inquire into the attack by aboriginals upon Mr. Morton. Statement marked "B" gives the details in this case. Some aboriginals were killed - the precise number is not stated.

The action taken by the Department in relation to each of the cases mentioned is outlined in Statement "C".

The report furnished by the Government Resident in response to enquiry, telegraphed at an early stage, is contained in Statement "D".

The Government Resident has since advised by wire that he is taking action to visit the localities of the occurrence in order to make full investigation.

Some preliminary information has been obtained as to the possibility of securing a suitable person from South Australia for the purpose of holding an independent inquiry, if so desired. This information is contained in Statement "E".

/The information

CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.SHOOTING OF ABORIGINALS.

The following statement shows the position in regard to the recent shooting of aboriginals in Central Australia as the result of police action, so far as can be set out on the information which has been received.

In the first place, the following extracts from a report which has just been received may be informative. This report has been supplied by the Aborigines' Friends' Association, which has its headquarters at Adelaide. It was presented to the Association by Mr. J.H. Edgar, F.R.C.S., who visited the Great Reserves set apart for the aboriginals in Central and South Australia at the request of the Association. His visit was made in company with an agent of the Association, Mr. E.E. Kramer. The report is a comprehensive and interesting one, but for the present purpose it will be sufficient to quote the following passages:-

"The social condition of the wild black seemed to me astounding. It is true we only met a few scores, but they were certainly representative, and we were glad there were no more. These specimens were entirely nude with bodies smeared with grease and ochre. They were devoid of ornament or decoration except, perhaps, the hair which in the men was done up in large obignons. Only the spear with the ingenious thrower was in use, and their pitchies are poor and inadequate vessels for carrying and retaining water. They eat their meat half, or almost entirely, raw, and they cannot boil water."

.... "In spite of much balderdash to the contrary, the wild black in the regions visited by us is in some respects a disgusting, useless creature, living a crude, animal, anti-social existence; producing nothing, and frequently a menace to the lives and property of men on the frontier. Moreover, they are slaves to unscientific and harmful magic and superstition; the victims of needless suffering and shameful mutilations, and constantly shocking our Christian ideas of decency and propriety."

.... "They produce nothing, and exterminate game, the of which they neither use nor export. But th' is not a they have just killed Brookes; and ask Erlidu other centres and it will be apparent that the annoyance, if not a menace, to the brave taxpa fringes of the Reserves."

It appears evident that the blacks who have in the recent tragedies are of the class described. They are believed to have been strangers to the district, have arrived there from the Western Australian border months back the settlers in this district complained of depredations by aboriginals, and requested police assistance. When made of the killing of cattle, sheep and goats, the settlers were feeling apprehensive of further trouble. At the time these complaints were received news came of an old man named Brookes, a dingo shooter. Brookes sitting alone in his camp, was approached by a lubra for food. While his attention was engaged with the woman a signal from her, a number of blacks, estimated at 10, came up from behind, and while the lubra held his arms, they killed him to death with their weapons. His body was subsequently found buried in a rabbit burrow, in a frightfully mutilated state. His property was taken by the blacks.

/A furth/

GOVRES.

~~DARWIN~~, ALICE SPRINGS.

28.11.28

Government has decided appoint tribunal inquire into recent shooting
aboriginals. Will consist of three members including yourself.
stop Desire you will take all preparatory steps for purpose of
inquiry so that it may be commenced as soon as possible after other
members arrive.

Komits
9/11

COPY

THE AUSTRALIAN
THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE.

Adyar House, 25 Bligh Street,
SYDNEY.

World Peace Department.

20th November, 1928

The Right Honorable S. M. Bruce,
Prime Minister,
CANBERRA.

Sir,

In connection with the reports concerning the shooting of natives, the World Peace Department of the Theosophical Order of Service adopted the following resolution:-

"We, Members of the World Peace Union of the Theosophical Order of Service, have learned with horror of the report of the shooting of a number of aborigines in Central Australia, and enter a most emphatic protest against such action, and request that the fullest investigation be made into the matter and those responsible be brought to account for such action."

I have the honour to be, etc.,

(SGD.) GILBERT WHITE.

Secretary.

COPY.

A.300/1.

Westley College;
SOUTH PERTH.
W.A.

18/11/28.

To the Prime Minister.

Dear Sir,

Soon after the slaughter of those other Aborigines about two years back five educated Aborigines and one half-cast, called on our Premier to give their views as to how their people should be treated.

I do not think much good came of it.

We, during the War, were at the mercy of the Japanese Navy. They played the game. Why not play the game and let these men and the Rev. Noble have a say as to what would be best for their people, whose land we have taken, and perhaps, who knows, Churches instead of sending money to convert other coloured races. Well, spend it on our own Aborigines and they would have no cause to be shamed and appalled or horrified at the treatment the Aborigines are receiving.

Respectfully,

(SGD.) E. FRASER.

[140]

Lettergram

TOURIST BUREAU
QUEENS WALK
MELBOURNE

MISTER A. O'KELLY LEAVING CANBERRA SATURDAY NIGHT EN ROUTE ALICE SPRINGS
PLEASE RESERVE FIRST CLASS SEAT AND SLEEPER ADELAIDE EXPRESS FROM MELBOURNE
TUESDAY NEXT STOP MR. O'KELLY WILL PRESENT ORDER FOR TICKET FROM THIS
DEPARTMENT ON ARRIVAL MELBOURNE

HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT.

W/17

COPY.

A.300/1.

The Studio,
SORRENTO.
19/11/28.

To

The Right Hon. S.M. Bruce,
MELBOURNE.

Dear Sir,

I am glad to see you are going to investigate the matter of the trouble with the Aborigines of Australia, and as the evidence of one who has lived amongst them may be of value to you, I am writing to give you the opinion of my sister, a professional nurse, who lived in Broome, W.A. for some time.

When she returned to Melbourne she expressed herself with great indignation about the injustice from which the natives suffer, and said the trouble between the Aborigines and the white men was invariably caused through the latter interfering with the black women. She also said that in one district the eligible white women waited upon the Administrator for the District and petitioned him to remove the aboriginal camp as otherwise they (the white women) would have no chance of matrimony.

Now, Mr. Bruce in America a negro is lynched for interfering with a white woman and the civilized world thinks it justifiable, but to my mind it is not so despicable a crime as that against the helpless ignorant black woman.

The latter is just as precious to her man as the white woman is to her husband, moreover it is a three-fold crime the white man commits, first against the woman, second against her husband, and third against the half-caste children which result.

Even here the laws dealing with sexual offences are quite inadequate and nothing less than segregation or a surgical operation is sufficient.

I will take this opportunity of thanking you for what you did in response to my request about the R.S. Mr. Jno. Haifes. I am glad to say he is in much better health, also has a prospect of regular employment from a local carrier.

With apologies for taking up your valuable time.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

(SGD)(MISS) AMY MORGAN.

The address of the sister mentioned above is -

Miss Adeline Morgan,
15 Victoria St.,
ST. KILDA. S.2.

(She does not know I am writing you.)

*Atkinson white men
by natives.*



PRIME MINISTER.

JH/Mc

A.300/1.

The Secretary,
Department of Home & Territories.

Referred, by direction, for favour of advice.

P. E. Deane
Secretary.

28 NOV 1928 P.M.

27 NOV 1928

[143]

27/11/28.

PRIME MINISTER.

PREMIER

BRISBANE.

THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT PROPOSES IMMEDIATELY TO APPOINT A TRIBUNAL TO ENQUIRE INTO THE RECENT SHOOTING OF ABORIGINALS IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA STOP IT IS URGENTLY NECESSARY FOR US TO OBTAIN THE FULLEST INFORMATION AND TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NECESSARY STOP THE TRIBUNAL WILL CONSIST OF THREE AND MY GOVERNMENT WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOUR GOVERNMENT COULD LOAN US THE SERVICES OF MR O'KELLY S.M. CAIRNS TO ACT AS CHAIRMAN STOP WE WOULD OF COURSE DEFRAY ALL EXPENSES INCLUDING SALARY WHILST EMPLOYED IN THIS CAPACITY STOP YOUR PROMPT REPLY WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

BRUCE

PRIME MINISTER.

1441

PRIME MINISTER.

COPY OF TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM THE PREMIER
OF QUEENSLAND, ADDRESSED TO THE PRIME MINISTER,
dated 28/11/1928.

REPLYING YOUR TELEGRAM TWENTY-SEVENTH WILL MAKE AVAILABLE SERVICES
O'KELLY FOR PURPOSES INQUIRY PLEASE ADVISE ANTICIPATED PERIOD OF
INQUIRY.

MCCORMACK, PREMIER.

[245]

PRIME MINISTER.

28/11/28.

PREMIER

ADELAIDE.

THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT PROPOSES IMMEDIATELY TO APPOINT A TRIBUNAL TO INQUIRE INTO THE RECENT SHOOTING OF ABORIGINALS IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA STOP IT IS URGENTLY NECESSARY FOR US TO OBTAIN THE FULLEST INFORMATION AND TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NECESSARY STOP THE TRIBUNAL WILL CONSIST OF THREE AND MY GOVERNMENT WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOUR GOVERNMENT COULD LOAN US THE SERVICES OF POLICE INSPECTOR P. GILES STATIONED AT PORT AUGUSTA TO ACT AS A MEMBER STOP ESTIMATED HIS SERVICES WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR PERIOD OF FROM TWO TO THREE MONTHS STOP WE WOULD OF COURSE DEFRAY ALL EXPENSES INCLUDING SALARY WHILST EMPLOYED IN THIS CAPACITY STOP YOUR PROMPT REPLY WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

BRUCE

PRIME MINISTER.

G. BY. JU/VS

PRIME MINISTER.

28/11/28.

[146]

PREMIER

BRISBANE.

THANKS YOUR TELEGRAM TODAY'S DATE RE MR O'KELLY STOP ESTIMATED
HIS SERVICES WILL BE REQUIRED FOR PERIOD FROM TWO TO THREE MONTHS.
WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE IF HE COULD PROCEED AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE
DATE TO ALICE SPRINGS IN ORDER THAT ENQUIRY MAY BE COMMENCED
WITH DELAY. GOVERNMENT RESIDENT WILL BE INSTRUCTED MEET O'KELLY
ON ARRIVAL.

PRIME MINISTER.

2/10

[47]

PRIME MINISTER.

JU/vs

The Secretary,
Department of Home & Territories.

Referred, by direction, for information.

28 NOV 1928 A.M.

B. Deane
Secretary.

NOV 28 1928

IS.

28/10740.

30th November, 1928.

U R G E N T.

MEMORANDUM:-

The Secretary,

Prime Minister's Department.

With reference to your memorandum of the 28th November, No. I.300/1, relative to the appointment of a Tribunal to inquire into the recent shooting of aboriginals in Central Australia, I desire to point out that there is no law (with the exception of a South Australian Act of 1873, which is of doubtful application) in force in Central Australia which would empower such a tribunal to take evidence on oath or which would give protection and immunity to the members in the exercise of their duties.

If desired that the members of the tribunal should have power to subpoena witnesses and to take evidence on oath, and that they should have protection and immunity in the exercise of their duties, the position could be met by the passage of an Ordinance for the Territory of Central Australia or by the appointment of a Royal Commission.

(Sgd.) W. J. CLEGG

Secretary.

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

Sydney Monthly Meeting held November 14th, 1928.

This monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends has heard with feeling amounting to horror of the deliberate shooting down of at least 17 Aborigines in Central Australia by or with the concurrence of a recognised officer of the Commonwealth Government.

Humanity demands and the reputation of our Government requires that the fullest enquiries by a Competent Authority be at once instituted into these shootings and their attendant circumstances so that steps may be taken to prevent the recurrence of such atrocities and the rights of the Aborigines be safe-guarded.

Arthur Wall

COPY (WITH ENCL.) H. & T.

Clerk.

A.300/1.

COPY

Friends Meeting House,
Devonshire Street,
SYDNEY.

November 21st, 1928.

The Right Hon. S.M. Bruce, P.C., M.C., M.P.,
Prime Minister's Department,
CANBERRA. R.C.T.

Dear Sir,

I am instructed by the Sydney Meeting of the Society of Friends to send you the enclosed Minute passed by our Society on November 14th.

We are glad to hear that your Government has instituted enquiries and we trust that these will be complete and without respect of persons, that the outcome may be such as to ensure confidence that the rights of the Aborigines will in future be thoroughly safe-guarded.

Yours sincerely

(SGD.) ARTHUR WALTERS.

Clerk.

1511
PRIME MINISTER.

A.300/1.

Dear Sir,

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 21st November, transmitting copy of a minute passed by the Society of Friends, Sydney, on November 14th, regarding the killing of Aborigines in Central Australia, and to inform you that your representations have been noted.

Yours faithfully,

S e c r e t a r y .

Arthur Walter, Esq.,
Clerk,
Friends Meeting House,
Devonshire Street,
S Y D N E Y.

115



PRIME MINISTER.

JU/Mc

A.300/1.

The Secretary,
Department of Home & Territories.

Referred, by direction, for favour of information.

P. J. Deane
Secretary.

80 NOV 1928 A.M.

80 NOV 1928



JU/MP. Copy

Copy of telegram addressed to the Prime Minister
by the Premier of South Australia,
dated Adelaide, 30th November, 1928.

Your telegram consent to make available services
of Police Inspector Giles to act on Tribunal to enquire
into recent shootings of aboriginals.

The Secretary,
Department of Home and Territories.

Referred, by direction, in connection with
my minute of 28th November, 1928.

Beane
Secretary,
Prime Minister's Department.

30/11/28

30 NOV 1928 P.M.

Attacks by natives



Police Station.

Alice Springs.

Nov 22nd, 1928.

Sir, Re Discharged prisoners, Padygar & Akirkra.

On the 13th instant I left Darwin per train with the above named two discharged prisoners, on arrival at Mataranka the following afternoon I transferred my charges to my Car then left en route Alice Springs camping for the first night at "The War Lock water hole", the two discharged prisoners had supper and their liberty, I pointed out a spot about fifty yards distant from my Car and instructed them to sleep there.

At daylight the following morning I was up and called the witness La-la who was also returning with me, there was no sign of

Padygar and Akirkra, they had evidently disappeared during the night, before continuing on my journey I followed their tracks for some little distance to satisfy myself that they had gone, I then proceeded on my journey and arrived at Barrow Creek on the 17th instant.

I have the honor to be.

Sir.

Your Obedient Servant.

G. Murray, M.C.

To,

The Commissioner Of Police.

Alice Springs.

(Through Sgt Noblet.)

174/28

Forwarded for the information of the Secretary, Department of Home and Territories.

H. Cannon
1 - DEC 1928 A.M.

Government Resident.
22:11:28

[155]

PRIME MINISTER.

Mc/BIEN.

A. 300/1.

30 NOV 1923

Dear Madam,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your lettergram of 28th November, expressing appreciation of the action of the Government in appointing a Board to enquire into the killing of Natives in Central Australia.

Yours faithfully,

Secretary.

The President,
National Council of Women of South Australia,
Room 20, A.N.A. Building,
Flinders Street,
A D E L A I D E.

107

1565

A.300/1.

EMN.

COPY OF LETTERGRAM ADDRESSED TO THE PRIME MINISTER FROM
THE BOWMAN NATIONAL COUNCIL WOMEN, EAST TERRACE, ADELAIDE,
DATED 28th NOVEMBER.

MUCH APPRECIATE APPOINTMENT BOARD TO ENQUIRE INTO RECENT
KILLING OF NATIVES CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.

*Attacks by
radicals*

157

PRIME MINISTER.



Mc/ELN.

A.300/1.

The Secretary,
Department of Home and Territories.

Referred, by direction, in connection
with previous correspondence.

P. J. Deane

Secretary.

1 - DEC 1928 A.M.

30 NOV 1928

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.
(CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.)



ADDRESS:
"GOVRES." ALICE SPRINGS.

IN REPLY
PLEASE QUOTE

NO. 172/28

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT RESIDENT,

ALICE SPRINGS. 22nd November 1928. [158]

1 - DEC 1928 A.M.

The Secretary,
Department of Home and Territories,
C a n b e r r a .

With reference to your code telegram of 10th instant, I have to report that, from information now to hand from the Crown Law Officer at Darwin, no grounds were given for acquittal.

Mounted Constable Murray's tracker was not taken as a witness because the interpreter (Alex Wilson, half-caste) had acted as tracker and it was not considered that the other tracker's evidence would be needed as he was not an actual witness of the murder.

With regard to the two boys, Skipper and Dodge, they were very young - even younger than the eye-witness. They did not witness the murder nor did they see the body of Brooks which had been buried before they got back to the scene of the murder with the camels.

The only white man who saw the body was Bruce Chapman who had it re-interred. Although a signed statement by Chapman was included in the evidence submitted to Darwin, Chapman unfortunately died in the Alice Springs Hostel of Cerebro Meningitis three days after his arrival here.

The evidence relied upon was that of the eye-witness Lala and Constable Murray. In view of the prisoners' admission of guilt at the lower Court, it was not considered necessary to provide any more witnesses who could be considered as material witnesses.

From a newspaper report, I understand the Judge refused to admit any evidence given at the Lower Court.

The whole of the evidence taken in the lower Court at Alice Springs was forwarded to the Attorney General, Canberra.

Government Resident.

[159]

COPY OF TELEGRAM received by the Rt.Hon.the Prime Minister, from the Hon.the Premier of Queensland, dated 1st December, 1928.

Replying your wire 28th O'Kelly instructed proceed immediately
Alice Springs O'Kelly advises Quantas quotes approximately one
1165 hundred and sixtyfive pounds aerial trip from Hughenden alternative
~~route via Adelaide approximately three weeks also asks where pick~~
up Commission and instructions - please advise - urgent.

24603

PRIME MINISTER.

The Secretary,
Home and Territories Department.

Forwarded, by direction, for favour of advice.

4 - DEC 1928 A.M. *P. J. Deane*
Secretary.

shall come to be known to
recess situation and to
see this Dept. papers. He
could then proceed to Abing
Springs via S. A. where he could
pick up Inspt. Giles. The
Govt. Resident could pick them
up at Odnadatta or, if
possible, further along the
railway.

W.C.
4/12/18.

The Secretary

As papers above that
labeled "X" are new.

Inspector Giles' services will
be made available.

Aborigines who were ac-
quitted of murder of Brooks escaped
from boat, Jurney, when returning
to b.c.

I have seen memo 22/11/28 from
Govt. Resident.

With regard to the telegram
from P. D. Kane of 1/12/28, Mr.
P. Strachan informed me that the
question of the status of the tribunal
will be submitted to the P.M.
this morning.

I suggested that Mr O'Kelly

15th November 1928

Dear G. Forde

As I will be engaged tonight I will not be able to attend your final meeting. Before voting tomorrow I want to know what you are going to do regarding the Continual atrocities that are being indulged in over in West Australia and the Northern Territory. The latent slaughter was given as five men and two women but later it is seventeen and will in all probability be nearer to seventy when investigated.

The Bruce Page Government have done nothing and Scullen Forde and the other Labour members have assisted them to do it. All my life I have been horrified with unprovoked massacres of Aborigines.

As neither the Church (with the exception of Methodist missionaries) nor Parliament give them any protection

I am moving in the matter and will not vote for any person who does not give an assurance that

that guilty members will be prosecuted and convicted I am aware that they have no votes hence no protection. In many cases the infants who are not shot are left for the dingoes and ant to torture. Kindly advise this at your meeting tonight. Regards
L. A. Corrie



THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

26th November 1928. CANBERRA.

Hon. Sir Neville Howse, V.C., M.P.,
Minister for Home and Territories,
CANBERRA.

Dear Sir Neville,

Kindly give the fullest consideration to the attached letter from Mr J.A. Collier, 40 Dawson Road, Rockhampton in regard to the atrocities amongst the blacks in Western AUSTRALIA and the Northern Territory, and reply to the points raised by him. I presume you are having a searching inquiry made into the whole matter, and I shall be glad if you will furnish me with a copy of the report as soon as it is available, *and post another copy to Mr. J.A. Collier.*

Yours sincerely,

P. M. F. G. G.

18.

CANBERRA. 1st December, 1928.

Dear Mr. Forde,

With reference to your letter of the 26th November, addressed to Sir Neville House, enclosing a communication from Mr. J.A. Collier, 40 Dawson Road, Rockhampton, I desire to inform you that the Government has appointed an independent tribunal to inquire into the shooting of aboriginals in Central Australia.

Your request that you and Mr. Collier be supplied with a copy of the report of the tribunal has been noted.

With regard to Mr. Collier's remarks regarding alleged atrocities in Western Australia, I desire to point out that the Commonwealth Government has no jurisdiction in regard to aboriginals in that State.

Yours faithfully,

A.L.G.

F.M. Forde Esq.,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA.

[166]

ET. 0.2.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.—POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

OFFICE DATE STAMP.

RECEIVED TELEGRAM.

The first line of this Telegram contains the following particulars in the order named.

STATION FROM. WORDS. TIME AND DATE LODGED. No.



1 ALICE SPRINGS 22/16 5pm 29th

Remarks.

To

HOMETER CANBERRA.

30 NOV 1928 A.M.

This message has been received subject to the Post and Telegraph Act and Regulations.

The time received at this Office is shown at the foot of the Form.
Sch. C.337/1928.—C.D.S.—B.E.S.S.

YOOGUIWYZZ' UARIHJUFAS' PHEMOMUBVY' SOLB'FUWRO' ZYXAGIAWOD YOWOW

ZYXAGKHUGE XOOOOP IUBI' MUBZUISBRI' HIEOT' ZARKABAGOF' ~~LAMAGAXXUM~~

SIWIWZYKAG KHUGEXOOOO INWUPUYTBO' GEYUYLOENK' SIWIVOLJUY' UOVAXIBIHI' MIBYH

AUNIL.

GOVRES.

9 30gj

MUUBY

b.b. cover

DECODE:

[Your telegram dated 28th November if tribunal including representative Missions suggest Ernest Eugene Kramer resident Missionary here for Aborigines Friends Association (stop) Kramer has many years experience local conditions (stop) Please advise when may I expect ^{members} Melbourne and arrive here.

GOVRES.

Date for report of these members
C/O

IS.

1st December, 1928.

The Secretary,

Prime Minister's Department.

With reference to previous correspondence relative to the appointment of a tribunal to inquire into the shooting of aboriginals in Central Australia, I sub-join, for the consideration of the Prime Minister, decode of a telegram received from the Government Resident of that Territory:-

"Your telegram dated 28th November if tribunal including representative Missions suggest Ernest Eugene Kramer resident missionary here for Aborigines Friends Association (stop) Kramer has many years experience local conditions. "

Reverend Mr. Kramer has been working amongst the aboriginals of Central Australia for a number of years. He is supplied from time to time with rations by the Government for distribution amongst indigent aboriginals and has performed very good work in this connection.

Should it be deemed desirable that the Missions be represented on the tribunal, this Department is of opinion that the claims of Mr. Kramer merit favourable consideration.

[Sgd.] W. J. CLEMENS

Secretary.

IS.

28/10740.

4th December, 1928.

MEMORANDUM :-

The Secretary,

Prime Minister's Department.

With reference to your memorandum of to-day's date, forwarding copy of a telegram dated 1st December, from the Premier of Queensland, relative to the appointment of Mr. O'Kelly, S.M., as a member of the tribunal to inquire into the shooting of aboriginals in Central Australia, it is suggested that Mr. O'Kelly should visit Canberra for the purpose of perusing this Department's file of papers relating to the matter to be inquired into. He could then proceed to Alice Springs via South Australia and meet Inspector Giles in that State.

Messrs. O'Kelly and Giles could then proceed to Oodnadatta or, if possible, further along the newly constructed railway line, where they could be met by the Government Resident of Central Australia.

The question of the issue of a commission and instructions to Mr. O'Kelly would appear to be dependent upon the Government's decision as to the status of the tribunal, reference to which was made in my memorandum of the 30th November.

W. J. G.
Secretary.



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Canberra Reading Room
Queen Victoria Terrace
Parkes ACT

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

Home and Territories Department.

FILE OF PAPERS.

SUBJECT:

*Papers returned by
Mr O'Kelly.*

MINUTES NOT TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS COVER.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

Telegraphic Address:
"Hometel, Canberra."

[169]

IS.

HOME AND TERRITORIES DEPARTMENT.

CANBERRA. F.C.T.

1st December, 1928.

The Secretary,
Prime Minister's Department.



With reference to previous correspondence relative to the appointment of a tribunal to inquire into the shooting of aboriginals in Central Australia, I sub-join, for the consideration of the Prime Minister, decode of a telegram received from the Government Resident of that Territory:-

"Your telegram dated 28th November if tribunal including representative Missions suggest Ernest Eugene Kramer resident missionary here for Aboriginals Friends Association (stop) Kramer has many years experience local conditions. "

Reverend Mr. Kramer has been working amongst the aboriginals of Central Australia for a number of years. He is supplied, from time to time, with rations by the Government for distribution amongst indigent aboriginals and has performed very good work in this connection.

Should it be deemed desirable that the Missions be represented on the tribunal, this Department is of opinion that the claims of Mr. Kramer merit favourable consideration.

W. J. Cramer

Secretary.

*R. Cramer has been
appointed*

*H. J. T.
Kramer
D. H.*

*Anticipated to be
"Cramer has already
been appointed"*

J. H.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.



IN REPLY
PLEASE QUOTE
No. 28/10740.

IS.

HOME AND TERRITORIES DEPARTMENT.

CANBERRA, F.C.T.

30th November, 1928.

U R G E N T.



The Secretary,

Prime Minister's Department.

With reference to your memorandum of the 28th November, No. I.300/1, relative to the appointment of a Tribunal to inquire into the recent shooting of aboriginals in Central Australia, I desire to point out that there is no law (with the exception of a South Australian Act of 1873, which is of doubtful application) in force in Central Australia which would empower such a tribunal to take evidence on oath or which would give protection and immunity to the members in the exercise of their duties.

If desired that the members of the tribunal should have power to subpoena witnesses and to take evidence on oath, and that they should have protection and immunity in the exercise of their duties, the position could be met by the passage of an Ordinance for the Territory of Central Australia or by the appointment of a Royal Commission.

W. J. C. C. C.

Secretary.

Cabinet

Insurance to be drafted

by W. G. M. P. J. M. Bruce

IS.

4th December, 1928.

U R G E N T.

MEMORANDUM :-

The Secretary,
Attorney-General's Department.

Cabinet recently decided to appoint a tribunal to inquire into the shooting of aboriginals in Central Australia.

In view of the fact that there is no law (with the exception of a South Australian Act of 1873, which is of doubtful application to the present case) in force in Central Australia which would empower such a tribunal to subpoena witnesses and take evidence on oath, or which would give protection and immunity to the members in the exercise of their duties, the Prime Minister's Department was asked whether it was desired that a Royal Commission should be appointed or whether a special Ordinance should be prepared to meet the case.

The Prime Minister has directed that an Ordinance be prepared.

It is suggested that an Ordinance on the lines of the attached copy of the Commissions of Inquiry Ordinance 1927 of the Territory of New Guinea may be suitable for the purpose.

As the Prime Minister has directed that the tribunal should proceed to Alice Springs at the earliest possible date, I shall be glad if you will kindly treat this matter as one of urgency.

W. J. G.
Secretary.

[172]

Govres.

Alice Springs.

4.12.28

Your code telegram twentyninth as tribunal had already been appointed
regret suggestion cannot be adopted stop Tribunal will consist of
O'Kelly S.M. of Cairns, Police Inspector Giles of South Australia and
yourself. O'Kelly will be Chairman stop You will be advised when other
members expected arrive Oodnadatta stop Desired you meet them there.

Compton
9/2

QB/BK.

28/10740.

5th December, 1928.

The Secretary
to the Treasury.

I desire to inform you that Cabinet has directed that an enquiry should be held into the shooting of certain aboriginals in Central Australia.

Mr. J.C. Caswood, Government Resident, Central Australia; Mr. O'Kelly, Stipendiary Magistrate, Cairns, and Inspector Giles of the South Australian Police Force, have been appointed as a Board of Enquiry to investigate the matter.

There is no provision on the Estimates of expenditure to meet the cost of this enquiry, which it is estimated will amount to about £800.

I shall be glad therefore if approval may be given for the creation of a new item under Division 148 - Central Australia, Sub-division 3, Miscellaneous, to be known as "Item 6 - Enquiry into the shooting of certain aboriginals in Central Australia" and for the issue of a supplementary warrant authority thereunder for the sum of £800 in favour of the Authorising Officer of this Department.

(Sgd.) W. J. CLEMENS

S e c r e t a r y.

C/- Admelsy Proprietary Ltd.,
Collins House
Melbourne
27th November 1928

His Honour,
The Government Resident.
Alice Springs C.A.

Your Honour,

I desire to bring to your notice an incident with blacks on November 13th instant at Tomson's Rockhole situated 12 miles South of Mt. Davidson.

Before arrival at the Rockhole, I sent one truck ahead to make camp while I halted my truck at this Rockhole in order to prospect a neighbouring hill. As another member of my party and I were returning to the truck we saw four blacks approaching - they were singing out to attract our attention. As we prepared to start away two men appeared round the rocks bringing an aged lubra with them, whom they offered to us. Without delay, we drove away and found camp made about one mile ahead - that is East.

Soon after, the same two men and two lubras came up to effect the same purpose. One boy came right into camp in disregard of my signs to keep away and, as he refused to depart, I had to use the whip. All then departed hurriedly.

Shortly after dark, a string of spinifex fires sprang up, starting at the rockhole and extending towards our camp. We stood by but withheld any action till the firestick of the leader was seen close amongst the low scrub. A rocket from a Verey signal pistol but this surprise failed to halt the four blacks clearly in view in the light of the fires. Others were coming up behind.

Another rocket was put up and a shot fired over the approachers. Seeing this also would not stop them, a number of shots were fired. The blacks thereupon retired.

Later I went out to scout and, having heard someone approaching for several minutes, I fired in his direction. Watch was kept for the remainder of the night but nothing further took place.

At daylight, an examination of tracks revealed that the blacks had come to about 80 yards from camp but no signs indicating casualties could be found.

As we left camp the spinifex was fired about the rockhole. Evidently these blacks have had little or no contact with whites and are ignorant of the danger of firearms.

(Sgd) Michael Terry.

P.s. In connection with this report, I think it is useful to bring to your notice that the blacks we have come into contact with in the country west to the Granites have all been in good condition and the presence of numerous hunting fires gives indication of sufficient water supply.

Michael Terry.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
(CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.)



TEL. ADDRESS:
"GUVRES," ALICE SPRINGS.

IN REPLY
PLEASE QUOTE

NO.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT RESIDENT,
ALICE SPRINGS. 27th November 1928.

5 DEC 1928 A.M.

The Secretary,
Department of Home and Territories,
Canberra.

I forward herewith, for the information of the Hon. the Minister, copy of a statement handed to me by Mr. Michael Terry in connection with some trouble he had with natives on his recent journey to The Granites.

Mr. Terry has asked that, as he is under contract to certain newspapers, this statement be not used for publication until after his articles appear.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. B. Sawood".

Government Resident.

Attachment 100-5-4

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
(CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.)



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TEL. ADDRESS:
"GOVRES." ALICE SPRINGS.

IN REPLY
PLEASE QUOTE

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT RESIDENT.

ALICE SPRINGS. 27th November 1928.

NO.....

The Secretary,
Department of Home and Territories,
C a n b e r r a.

I have to acknowledge receipt of your telegram of 22nd instant in regard to the possibility of the appointment of an investigation party in connection with the recent killing of natives by a Police Party.

If the party is comprised of not more than two, the only outfit they would require would be a camp sheet and two blankets each. These, I suggest, should be purchased in Adelaide. Cooking and eating utensils, etc., can be supplied here.

If it is considered desirable, the Government car can be sent to Oodnadatta to meet the party and convey them to Alice Springs.

For the purpose of collecting evidence, it will be necessary to travel to the scene of trouble - about two hundred miles from Alice Springs. Cars can be taken as far as Coniston Station and the remainder of the distance (about thirty miles) can be undertaken on horses or camels. The members of the investigation party may or may not deem it necessary to travel this last stage. The Government car can be utilised for the conveyance of passengers and Constable Murray's private utility for the conveyance of petrol, rations, etc. I understand horses or camels can be obtained at Coniston Station.

The itinerary I proposed to adopt was as set out above and my intention was to obtain signed statements from as many of those comprising the Police Party as possible and also to obtain statements from any aboriginals who had been in contact with the attacking natives.

Estimate of cost.

Camping outfit for two members	15	0	0
Sending car to Oodnadatta (or fares)	12	-	-
Cars to Coniston Station	227	-	-
The remuneration and travelling expenses besides fares of members to Oodnadatta cannot be estimated here.			
Travelling expenses Gov. Resident and Clerk (driver) would amount to £1:15:6 per day.			

The return trip from Alice Springs should also be included.

Government Resident.

COPY.

[27]

The Australian Board of Missions.

242 Pitt Street,
SYDNEY. N.S.W.

23rd November, 1928.

The Right Honorable
The Prime Minister of Australia,
Parliament House,
C A N B E R R A.

Right Honorable Sir,

I am requested by the Australian Board of Missions to send to you a resolution passed unanimously at the meeting of the Board held last week.

"That this Board has had its attention directed to press reports of the shooting of a number of aborigines by the police in Central Australia and welcomes the assurance of the Federal Government that a searching investigation will be made into the reported incidents. Reports of this nature cause untold damage to the good name of Australia throughout the world and therefore the Board desires to urge that the composition of the investigating commission be of such a nature as will inspire confidence in Australia and beyond."

I have the honor to be Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(SGD.) JOHN CHARLES SYDNEY
Archbishop of Sydney and

Primate of Australia,

President of the Australian
Board of Missions.

COPY OF TELEGRAM ADDRESSED TO THE PRIME MINISTER FROM
EARL M.L.C. PRESIDENT W.MORLEY SECRETARY, THOMAS STREET,
GORDON, SYDNEY, DATED 4TH DECEMBER, 1928.

ASSOCIATION PROTECTION NATIVE RACES BEGS TO CALL ATTENTION
OF PRIME MINISTER TO HIS TELEGRAM NOVEMBER FIFTEENTH IN
REPLY TO REQUEST FOR REPRESENTATIVE ON BOARD OF ENQUIRY
RE ALLEGED SHOOTING OF ABORIGINALS AND EARNESTLY HOPES
HE CAN GIVE FAVOURABLE REPLY.

COPY OF TELEGRAM ADDRESSED TO THE PRIME MINISTER FROM
EARL M.L.C. PRESIDENT W.MORLEY SECRETARY, THOMAS STREET,
GORDON, SYDNEY, DATED 4TH DECEMBER, 1928.

RESOLVED THAT IN THE MATTER OF APPOINTMENT BY COMMONWEALTH
GOVERNMENT OF BOARD OF ENQUIRY TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGED
SHOOTING OF SEVENTEEN NATIVES IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA BY
COMMONWEALTH POLICE OFFICERS THE COMMITTEE OF THE ASSOCIATION
FOR PROTECTION OF NATIVE RACES URGES UPON THE PRIME MINISTER
THE VITAL NECESSITY OF THE APPOINTMENT OF ADEQUATE LEGAL
AID FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE CASE FROM THE ABORIGINES
SIDE AND FOR THE PROPER EXAMINATION AND CROSS EXAMINATION
UPON OATH OF ALL WITNESSES IN THE INTEREST OF THE
ABORIGINES.

COPY OF TELEGRAM ADDRESSED TO THE PRIME MINISTER FROM
EARL M.L.C. PRESIDENT W.MORLEY SECRETARY, THOMAS STREET,
GORDON, SYDNEY, DATED 4TH DECEMBER, 1928.

RESOLVED THAT THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF ASSOCIATION FOR
THE PROTECTION OF NATIVE RACES HAS NOTED THAT THE COMMON-
WEALTH GOVERNMENT HAS APPOINTED A BOARD OF INQUIRY TO IN-
VESTIGATE ALLEGED SHOOTING SEVENTEEN ABORIGINALS MEN AND
WOMEN IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA BY COMMONWEALTH POLICE OFFICER
IT WOULD RESPECTFULLY URGE UPON PRIME MINISTER THAT THE
TERMS OF REFERENCE TO THE BOARD OF ENQUIRY SHOULD BE MADE
WIDE ENOUGH TO INCLUDE A FULL INVESTIGATION INTO THE CAUSES
WHICH LED TO THE MURDER OF MR BROOKS AND PARTICULARLY
INTO THE TRUTH OR OTHERWISE OF STATEMENTS ALLEGING THAT IN
THE DISTRICT CONCERNED SETTLERS HAD DRIVEN THE NATIVES FROM
THE WATER HOLES AT WHICH THEY HAD BEEN ACCUSTOMED TO FIND
FOOD AND SUSTENANCE BY WHICH ACT ON THE PART OF THE
SETTLERS IT IS ALLEGED THE ABORIGINALS INHABITATIONS HAD BEEN
REDUCED TO A CONDITION OF ALMOST STARVATION.