

[151]

PRIME MINISTER.

JU/EMN.

CANBERRA. F.C.T.

The Secretary,
Department of Home & Territories.

Referred, by direction, for favour of
attention.

P. E. Deane
Secretary

COPY OF TELEGRAM received by the Rt.Hon.the Prime Minister from
the Hon.the Premier of Queensland, dated 6th December,1928.

Replying your telegram fourth - O'Kelly will leave

Brisbane for Canberra Tuesday eleventh December.

COPY of telegram sent by the Rt.Hon.the Prime Minister to the
Hon.the Premier of Queensland, dated
4th December, 1928.

Your telegram 1st December Government would be glad if Mr.
O'Kelly could come Canberra earliest possible date order to
peruse Departmental files before proceeding Alice Springs.
Only one day need be spent here and he could travel by evening
train to Melbourne. Glad if you would advise me when O'Kelly
could leave Brisbane.

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PRIME MINISTER.

I300/1

The Secretary,
Home and Territories Department.

Forwarded, for information, by direction, in connection with your memorandum of 4th December, 1928, No. 28/10740.

8 - DEC 1928 A.M.

W. E. Deane
Secretary.

[185]

UE

1300/1

60 900 1000

Dear Sir,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 27th November, in which you submit your name for consideration for appointment to the Board of Enquiry which the Government proposes to institute to investigate the killing of aborigines in Central Australia.

A further communication will be addressed to you in the event of the Government desiring to utilise your services.

Yours faithfully,

P. H. G.
Secretary.

Major Almond, J.P.,
BERRY.
SOUTH COAST.

1286
COPY.

Berry,

South Coast.

Nov. 27th, 1928

To The Right Hon. Mr. Bruce,
Prime Minister, K.C.M.G.

Dear Sir,

In reference to the killing of Central Australia Natives or supposed killing near the Alice I have no doubt but that could clear that matter up to your satisfaction and all therein concerned. I know the Natives there quite well & their Habits. I lived for a time in the central districts and I have been right through to the Territory. The Natives move between the Government Gums (Fosina) and the Cooper. I really think I can clear all concerned in this killing of the Natives. Therefore I beg most respectfully to apply to be appointed to investigate on your behalf. I am an Engineer Mechanical & Motor by profession and having just finished organizing Eden Monaro for the Nationalist, I am free to proceed at once.

Hoping you will grant my request to help,

I am Yours Obediently,

Major Almond, J.P.,

Mining Engineer,

Berry, South Coast.

COPY.

Telegram received by the Rt.Hon.the Prime Minister from the
Reverend Martin, Chairman, National Missionary
Council, dated 6th December, 1928.

National Missionary Council deeply disappointed no
missionary representation on Aborigines Enquiry Commission -
urge this may be provided.

Rev.Martin, Chairman.

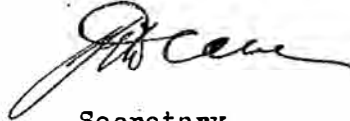
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PRIME MINISTER.

1300/1

The Secretary,
Home and Territories Department.

Forwarded, by direction, for favour of comment.



Secretary.

10 DEC 1928 P.M.

28 DEC 1928

21893

COPY.

COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN VICTORIA

30th November, 1928.

The Hon. The Prime Minister,
CANBERRA.

Dear Sir,

I am directed to forward you the following resolution agreed to at the last meeting of the Council of Churches:-

"That the Victorian Council of Churches is shamed and appalled to learn of the reported shooting of Aborigines including women in Central Australia, and urges full inquiry into the matter and that justice be done.

"That in view of the fact that other reports have been circulated of treatment meted out to Aborigines which could not be described as either British or Christian, this Council asks that the present interests and future safety of the Blacks within the Commonwealth be thoroughly investigated.

"That these Resolutions be forwarded forthwith to the Prime Minister who we are pleased to know has promised full inquiry into this specific case in Central Australia but we ask that the whole position pertaining to the physical and moral well-being of the aboriginals throughout our jurisdiction be publicly and carefully considered".

I am,

Faithfully yours,
GEORGE A. JUDKINS.

L'c 214

(190)

PRIME MINISTER.



The Secretary,
Home and Territories Department.

Forwarded, by direction, for favour of comment.

6 - DEC 1928 P.M.

J. G. Deane

Secretary. 2

DEC 1928

After further consideration and a general discussion, Inspector Johns brought forward the name of Mr. Lionel C.E. Gee, who was at one time a Warden in the Mines Department on the Goldfields in Central Australia. He was actually in the District in which the killing is supposed to have taken place. So far as he was aware, it would be about 17 years since Warden Gee left the District, but he considers that if a person with Magisterial experience were necessary he would place Warden Gee second to Inspector Giles. Gen. Leane is unacquainted with Warden Gee and could not express an opinion, but said he was prepared to accept Inspector Johns' recommendation in regard to the matter.

I have made personal inquiries regarding Mr. Gee and learn that he is now 74½ years of age. He was retired from the State Service at the age of 70. It was stated that if he had anything to do with aboriginals it would have been about 30 or 40 years ago when he was a Surveyor in the Survey Dept., and also later when he was Warden of Goldfields.

I have not interviewed Warden Gee for the reason that in my opinion a man of 74½ years would be too old for such an Inquiry.

If the appointment of a Police Officer of the S.A. Service would be acceptable to the Commonwealth Govt., I am satisfied, after my interview with Gen. Leane and Inspector Johns, that Inspector Giles would be an excellent man for appointment to conduct such an Inquiry. If, however, it is thought inadvisable to employ a Police Officer, I could make further inquiries as to the most suitable Magistrate available, but feel that I must support the view taken by Gen. Leane that the person selected to carry out the inquiries should have had actual personal experience in the Northern Territory and acquaintance with the blacks in those parts.

Should you desire any further information regarding the Magistrates, and advise me, I will make inquiries and let you know without any loss of time.

15/11/28.

(Sgd.) G.E. WILLSON. "

(Commonwealth Public Service Inspector,
Adelaide)

STATEMENT "E".

CONFIDENTIAL.

"To-day, upon receipt of your letter of the 13th inst., in respect of the killing of a number of aboriginals, following upon the murder of a white man named Brookes, I interviewed Brig.-General Leane, the Commissioner of Police here, and a personal friend of mine, and under a bond of confidence read to him portions of your letter, asking the General if he could suggest a suitable officer of the S.A. Govt., to undertake inquiries in the event of such being necessary.

General Leane said that if he were required to make an appointment for the purpose under consideration his selection would unhesitatingly be that of Police Inspector P. Giles, Police Officer in Charge of the Northern portion of South Australia, stationed at Port Augusta. He is 51 years of age, has had about 30 years' service. Commenced as a Trooper; was many years Clerk of Courts in different places, mostly in parts inhabited by aborigines, and is at the present time Prosecuting Officer in North Australia for the S.A. Govt. His District extends from the W.A. border to the Queensland border and connects at Oodnadatta with the Territorial Service.

Prior to the Commonwealth taking over he also controlled that part of the Territory now under the Commonwealth.

General Leane regards Inspector Giles as a well educated, fearless man, with a sound well-balanced mind who thoroughly understands the natives and their conditions of life, including those in the actual District in which the reported trouble has occurred.

General Leane informed me if the services of Inspector Giles were asked for he would immediately make him available for the Commonwealth Government. I pointed out to the General that "the man in the street" might view the appointment of a Police Officer with some suspicion and feel that any report furnished might be framed with the object of "whitewashing" the Police Force. I asked him if he could suggest a Magistrate with the necessary qualifications to undertake such an Inquiry.

After carefully reviewing the claims of all the present Magistrates, General Leane definitely stated that there was not one of them with the required experience amongst the blacks. He pointed out that it is absolutely essential the person selected must have a wide knowledge of the conditions under which the Police work in those distant parts, otherwise the Police Officers would probably not receive fair treatment in the investigation.

General Leane then suggested to me that Inspector Johns, who was in the Metropolitan area at the present time, had had wide experience in the Northern Territory, and amongst the blacks, might be consulted with a view to obtaining the name of any suitable officer whom Gen. Leane might have overlooked. I agreed and he called Inspector Johns in, and under a bond of confidence revealed to him the nature of my visit and asked him who he would suggest to hold such an Inquiry. Inspector Johns immediately stated that, with the exception of himself, there was only one man that he knew of, and he named Inspector Giles.

/After further

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.

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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.

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

STATEMENT "B".

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.

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.

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.

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.

1198/4

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 Morton 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 ^{several} 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 Ti-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

IS.

HOME AND TERRITORIES DEPARTMENT.

No.

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.G.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 chignons. 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 skins of which they neither use nor export. But this is not all, they have just killed Brookes; and ask Erldunda, Tempe, and other centres and it will be apparent that they are a real annoyance, if not a menace, to the brave taxpayers on the fringes of the Reserves. "

It appears evident that the blacks who have been concerned in the recent tragedies are of the class described in the report. They are believed to have been strangers to the district and to have arrived there from the Western Australian border. Some months back the settlers in this district complained of depredations by aboriginals, and requested police assistance. Reports were made of the killing of cattle, sheep and goats, and the settlers were feeling apprehensive of further trouble. At the time these complaints were received news came of the murder of an old man named Brookes, a dingo shooter. Brookes, while sitting alone in his camp, was approached by a lubra who asked for food. While his attention was engaged with the woman, at a signal from her, a number of blacks, estimated at 20, came up from behind, and while the lubra held his arms, battered 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 further

IS.

HOME AND TERRITORIES DEPARTMENT.

No.

Central Australia - Shooting of Aborigines.

Submitted for consideration that for the purpose of investigation arrangements be made with the South Australian Government to obtain the services of Inspector Giles, Police Officer in charge of the Northern portion of South Australia, stationed at Port Augusta, 51 years of age, 30 years service. Clerk of Courts in various places, mostly in parts inhabited by aborigines, at present time Prosecuting Officer for South Australian Government. Was formerly in control of that portion of the Territory in question. Reported as well educated, fearless man, sound well balanced mind, thoroughly understands the natives and their conditions of life, including those in actual district where incidents have occurred. (See Statement "E".)

If it is considered that this appointment may be questioned by reason of the fact that Inspector Giles is a Police Officer, it may be desirable to associate with him another person. In this connection, the following names are suggested:-

J.H. Edgar, writer of the Report, Aborigines' Friends' Association, copy of which is in the file. If this gentleman is willing to act in the desired capacity, his appointment should ensure that the investigation will be conducted without giving ground for allegation that the information obtained will be viewed from an administration standpoint.

Alternatively the name of Mr. C. Rogers, Senior Clerk, Commonwealth Public Service Inspector, Adelaide, might be considered. Mr. Rogers has acted for considerable periods as Public Service Inspector, South Australia. In that capacity he has undertaken a large volume of work of an investigatory character. He is a prominent member of the Methodist Church in South Australia, has good ability and can be depended upon to report conscientiously and impartially on any matter referred to him for that purpose.

W. J. B.
26.11.28

full particulars regarding Morton's case, and also that of Tilmouth, your 150/28, together with your observations thereon, and any other information which, in the light of the foregoing, would be of assistance to the Minister in connection with the matter. The latter should include, if possible, statements by Messrs. Morton and Tilmouth as to the facts in their cases.

This Department is at a loss to understand the sudden change in the attitude of the aboriginals of Central Australia towards white men. Unusual circumstances appear to be attached to the cases of the attacks on Brookes, Morton and Tilmouth, in that they have all been reported by Constable Murray, and have occurred recently and within a comparatively short time, while nothing of a similar nature had been previously reported for some years.

If you are aware of the reasons for the apparent sudden outbreak of hostility on the part of the aboriginals, they might be quoted.

In the circumstances of these cases, it is possible that, to satisfy public demand, an investigation by a specially appointed authority may be called for. With this possibility in view, will you be so good as to advise me what would be involved in the nature of travelling, outfit etc., to ensure that all evidence, which it is practicable to obtain, could be secured.

As indicative of the public interest likely to be aroused in the matter, I subjoin copies of two telegrams which, amongst other communications, have been received:-

"Darwin, 9th November, 1928.

"Desire lodge protest as local representative of Methodist Church against action of police party re Brookes murder case as revealed at Court seventeen killings men and women over period many days every shot sent to kill reveals ferocious spirit Request full inquiry.

Athol McGregor, Katherine. "

"Sydney, 9th November.

"Have received alarming report from Mission representatives Darwin regarding killing of natives by police stop Before I call my Board together to make protest can you inform me whether Department intends make fullest inquiry.

Burton, General Secretary, Methodist Mission.

(Sgt.) W. J. CLEMENS.

Secretary.

28/11/28.

CANBERRA. 9th November, 1928.

His Honour,
The Government Resident
of Central Australia,
ALICE SPRINGS.

With reference to your memorandum, No. 149/28,
I desire to invite attention to the following statements made in the
report of the 19th October by M.C. Murray, in regard to the action
taken by him to arrest the aboriginals implicated in the attack
upon Mr. W. Morton:-

"Unfortunately drastic action had to be taken, and
resulted in a number of male natives being shot. "

"Unfortunately a number of natives were killed. "

It is hardly necessary to comment on the serious
aspect of the killing of aboriginals by Government parties. This
Department must accept as one of its responsibilities the protection
and guardianship of all native races in Territories coming within
its jurisdiction, and in cases where aboriginals have suffered by
reason of action either by Government parties or some other agency,
the Minister must be satisfied that justification exists for the
action taken.

A number of requests have already been made to
the Department for details of the recent killing of aboriginals in
Central Australia and representations have been addressed to the
Minister by persons and Associations interested in the welfare of
native races.

To enable the Minister to give careful con-
sideration to the question of whether the recent killing of abori-
ginals in Central Australia was justified, and to reply to the
inquiries and representations that have been made to the Department
it is essential that he should be furnished with full and accurate
details of the incidents.

Full particulars should be furnished 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,
the action taken by the Coroner in regard to such reports. Con-
firmation should be obtained, wherever possible, of the statements
made by officers or persons connected with parties responsible for
the killing of aboriginals.

Statements such as those quoted from the report
by Constable Murray are of too indefinite a nature to be of any
assistance to the Minister.

In considering the report by Constable Murray
in regard to the action taken by him to arrest the aboriginals im-
plicated in the attack on Mr. Morton, it is noted that it is un-
accompanied by any observations by yourself which might be of
assistance to the Minister in arriving at a decision as to whether
the killing of the aboriginals was justified, or helpful in reply-
ing to inquiries addressed to this office regarding the matter.

You will, of course, recognise that, as the
representative of the Government in Central Australia, the
Minister would naturally look to the Government Resident for
advice and authentic information regarding all important happenings
in the Territory.

Full details in connection with the incidents
of the Brookes case have already been asked for and I shall be glad
if you will kindly furnish me, at the earliest possible date, with

/full

IS.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

Telegraphic Address:
"Hometel, Canberra."

HOME AND TERRITORIES DEPARTMENT.

CANBERRA, F.C.T.,

13th November, 1928.

IN REPLY
PLEASE QUOTE

No.

Dear Sir Neville,

A good deal of press publicity is now being given to the killing of aboriginals in Central Australia, following upon the murder by the blacks of a white man named Brookes.

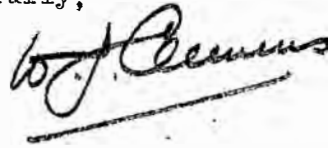
I have thought it advisable to let you know how the matter stands here, so that if you feel it necessary to comment on the matter you will have information available.

Following upon the first receipt of the news of the trouble, the Government Resident was wired for full particulars and asked to obtain and forward statements, wherever possible, from all parties concerned. I attach a copy of his reply on the subject. Further developments occurred, including the shooting of more aboriginals, following upon an attack upon a settler named Morton. The police report in this case was indefinite, and was forwarded by the Government Resident without comment. At the same time, another case was reported of an attack on a white man and the shooting of another aboriginal.

In view of the inadequacy of the reports from the departmental standpoint, the Government Resident has been again written to, and a copy of this communication is also attached.

You will note that in the last paragraph I refer to the possibility of an investigation. If the circumstances develop in that direction, it may be useful to have as much preliminary information as possible to minimise delay.

Yours faithfully,



The Honorable Sir N.R. Howse,
V.C., K.C.B., K.C.M.G., M.P.,
Minister for Home and Territories,

Commonwealth Offices,

S Y D N E Y.

Note:- Fatalities, Brookes' case 17; Tilmouth's case 1;
Morton's " two known, but a number of
others reported. Deaths include two lubras,
but no children are reported as having been
shot.

dict, it is quite likely that he was not amongst those massacred. From a casual meeting Murray struck me as being a good man, and he has a good reputation in the country. It seems to me ^{however} that the man who treats the aborigines as dirt, is regarded as the man for the job.

I might add that when I was at Oodnadatta, a number of blacks were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for spearing cattle, on New Crown Station.

I am glad that the matter of the massacre is in your capable hands, and know that as far as it is possible you will get at the root of the matter, but it will not be easy. Blacks' evidence goes for nothing against whites', and one has to read between the lines.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely



P.S. you are having a busy time just now. I hope and believe that your labours will be rewarded by a great National victory.

Cause of Death

From Coroner of R Chapman
and native La Sa Brooks met
his death by being murdered
by natives at near Coniston
Station Central Australia

J. W. Mackenroft J.P.

Coroner

Graystones

Wahroonga.

16th Nov. 1928

The Honourable

Neville C. Howse, V.C., K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

Parliament House

Canberra.

Dear Howse,

I see that you are interesting yourself, (and very rightly), in the matter of the massacre of the aborigines in Central Australia. I was in the neighbourhood of Barrow Creek, at the time, and a few days later, at Ryan's Well, a man named Neckar, who was an intimate friend of the murderer man, Frederick Brooke, told me all the circumstances connected with the murder. The part reported about a "girl" being concerned is something quite new. At the time the Police posse was out after the murderer. A few days later at Charlotte Waters, and again at Oodnadatta, I was told that the Police had shot, not 17 but 34 blacks "because they showed fight" Men women and children. Imagine a crowd of terrified blacks, armed with spears and boomerangs, "showing fight" against men armed with repeating rifles. I was naturally horrified and indignant, and if the matter had not been brought under your notice, I intend doing it myself. From what I saw and heard on this trip I feel that the unfortunate aborigines, do not get a fair deal. I am not excusing the murder of a white man, but the poor devils have great provocation. We have taken their country, and their hunting grounds, and water holes, and driven them back. In this time of unprecedented drought, the poor wretches are actually starving. and it was in a fight over the possession of Brooke's tucker box that he was killed. As the killer had come in from a different

Commonwealth Offices, Sydney.
18th November, 1928.

Dear Dr. Peckley,

Thanks for your letter of 16th inst. Up to the present I have had only an interim report regarding the unfortunate occurrences in Central Australia but I can assure you the matter will be thoroughly sifted and I shall not tolerate any unjustifiable interference with the aborigines let alone any unnecessary taking of life.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

r. F.A. Peckley,
Graystones,
Wahroonga, NSW.

HOME AND TERRITORIES DEPARTMENT.

No.

Associations and persons interested in native races
who have written to the Department regarding shooting
of aboriginals in Central Australia.

Norman Makin, M.P.

Asking for information.

Mr. Bleakley, Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Queensland.

Reporting statement made to him at Katherine by
Miss Lock, of Harding's Soak.

W. Langdon Parsons, M.P.

Asking for information.

Reverend Athol McGregor, Katherine.

Protesting against shooting of natives, and asking for
full inquiry.

General Secretary, Methodist Mission, Sydney, (Rev. Mr. Burton).

Referring to report received by him from McGregor and
asking whether Department intends make fullest inquiry.

Association for Protection of Native Races, Gordon.

Asking Prime Minister whether he would permit rep-
resentative of Association to be appointed a member of Commission
of Inquiry into shooting of natives. Also asking that Prime
Minister make public declaration of Government's policy and
intentions on subject of treatment of aboriginals.

Jac
26.11.28

Methodist Inland Mission, Melbourne.

Supporting request by McGregor for inquiry, and
asking that the scope of inquiry be broad with a view to framing
a national policy in respect of the treatment of aboriginals.

Women's Non-Party Association of South Australia.

Requesting inquiry into shooting of aboriginals.

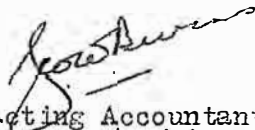
Australian Aborigines Mission, Waverley, N.S.W.

Asking that full and exhaustive inquiries be made into
the shooting of aboriginals.

24/11/28.

Provision has not been included in the above estimate for the payment of an honorarium to Messrs. Giles and O'Kelly if such payment is subsequently decided upon.

A letter addressed to the Treasury applying for the necessary warrant authority is attached.


Acting Accountant.
5/12/28.

213

HOME AND TERRITORIES DEPARTMENT.

GB/EK.

No. 28/10740.

MEMORANDUM:

Enquiry into the shooting of aboriginals
in Central Australia.

Cabinet has directed that an enquiry should be held into the shooting of certain aboriginals in Central Australia.

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

There is no provision on the estimates to cover the cost of this enquiry. Special application will require to be made to the Treasury for the necessary funds.

Before making the application a decision is desired as to the rate of travelling allowance to be paid to Messrs. Giles and O'Kelly.

Mr. Bleakley, the Queensland Protector of Aborigines, who was recently investigating aboriginal affairs in Central and North Australia was granted a flat rate of travelling allowance of 25/- per day. Mr. Cawood, the Government Resident of Central Australia, however, receives the following allowances:-

(a)	Travelling outside the Territory	-	25/- p.d.
(b)	Travelling inside the Territory	-	21/- "

It is considered that it would be reasonable to apply to Messrs. Giles and O'Kelly the same rates as are paid to the Government Resident, and it is recommended that approval be given to pay them at the rate of 25/- per day while travelling outside the Territory and at the rate of 21/- per day while travelling in the Territory.

The following estimate of expenditure, based on the above rates of travelling allowance, is submitted for information:-

<u>Salary of Mr. O'Kelly:</u>			
	3 months @ say	£750 p.a.	- £187.10. -
<u>Salary of Inspector Giles:</u>			
	3 months @ say	£750 p.a.	- 187.10. -
<u>Travelling expenses:</u>			
Mr. O'Kelly -			
	30 days @	25/- p.d.	- £37.10. -
	70 " @	21/- "	- 73.10. -
Inspector Giles -			
	7 days @	25/- p.d.	- 8.15. -
	70 " @	21/- "	- 73.10. -
Government Resident -			
	60 days @	21/- p.d.	- <u>63. - . -</u> 256. 5. -
<u>Fares:</u>			
	Cairns to Oodnadatta and return	-	59. 6. 4
	Adelaide to Oodnadatta and return	-	14.10. 4
	Contingencies	-	95. - . -
			<u>£800. 1. 8 /</u>

Suggest in Chairman's case allowance of job of 30/- & 25/- respectively

C.S.A.B. W.B.

As is disclosed by the Gaol records, the prison at Alice Springs has been overcrowded with native prisoners. Even then, there have been many instances where offences have not been reported by white settlers who said it was useless reporting them as they could get no immediate redress.

Owing to the fact that no Criminal Sittings are held at Alice Springs, all cases of cattle killing have to be reduced to charges of being in unlawful possession. This is done to allow offenders to be dealt with summarily by the local Bench.

The expense of taking witnesses and prisoners to Darwin necessitates this action. The natives look upon confinement in Alice Springs Gaol as a regular picnic and say that they are better fed while in prison than they are at the Missions. The Missioners have told me that Gaol is no deterrant and have even suggested a return to the old Police methods of flogging the natives.

Quite recently the Mission at Hermansberg have complained of the blacks, and are strong advocates for a Police Station in the vicinity for their own protection.

H. Gawood

Government Resident.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
(CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.)



[213]

Tel. Address:
"Govres." ALICE SPRINGS.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT RESIDENT,

ALICE SPRINGS. 6th December 1928.

IN REPLY
PLEASE QUOTE
NO. 197/28

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

14 DEC 1928 A.M.

With reference to your memorandum No. 28/9588 under date 9th November dealing with the report of Mounted Constable Murray on the result of the expedition to arrest the blacks concerned in the murderous attack on Mr. W. Morton, I have to state that I interviewed Mounted Constable Murray today and he has amplified his statements as follows:

" Unfortunately drastic action had to be taken and resulted in number of male natives being shot"

8 On this occasion Mounted Constable Murray states that the casualties numbered eight.

"Unfortunately a number of natives were killed"

4 The number of blacks shot on this occasion was four.

2
14 There were two natives killed by Mounted Constable Murray with the blacks' own weapons in the hand to hand encounter. The total number killed was fourteen.

In the report to the Coroner, M.C. Murray stated that a number of natives were killed - also that one native was killed by Morton when he fired at the blacks on the occasion when he was attacked by a number of natives.

When M.C. Murray reported the result of his investigation, I immediately forwarded the report for the information of the Minister as I realised the necessity of being in immediate possession of the facts in view of the agitation by the Missionary Societies. I made no comment as I was not in a position to do so.

I was arranging to visit the scene of the shooting in conjunction with Mr. Carrington as Coroner for the purpose of fully inquiring into the circumstances and also to enable an inquiry by the Coroner. However, the receipt of your telegram that you had posted a memorandum under date 9th November caused me to await receipt of this memorandum - subsequent correspondence shows that the memorandum did not arrive and, on your telegraphic advice, I further delayed action pending the receipt of same.

You say that the Department is at a loss to understand the sudden change in the attitude of the natives towards the white man - I cannot admit that the attitude is changed. When I arrived at Alice Springs in February 1927, complaints had then been lodged with Commissioner Stott from a number of settlers as to the depredations of the blacks - especially the spearing of cattle. Mr. Stott often expressed his worry over these complaints, but said that he did not have the men to cope with the work. I repeatedly advised him to apply for extra Police but he was afraid to do so.

6 ✓ 7
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
(CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.)



TEL. ADDRESS:
"GOVRES." ALICE SPRINGS.

IN REPLY
PLEASE QUOTE
NO. 196/28

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT RESIDENT,
ALICE SPRINGS. 6th December 1928.

14 DEC 1928 A.M.

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

With reference to your memorandum No. 28/3588 of 5th November, I have to advise that the actual facts as reported to me by Mounted Constable Murray have already been conveyed to you in my memorandum dated 4th September.

The report given by Miss Lock to Mr. Bleakley is incorrect so far as is known.

No children were killed. It is correct that two lubras were accidentally killed in combat. Mounted Constable Murray's explanation of this is that the happening was purely accidental and that, when he was off his horse and attacked by the mob of blacks, one of his party fired on the mob and it is assumed that the lubras were mixed with the male members of the tribe.

M.C. Murray emphatically states, on being further questioned that he instructed the party that, under no circumstances, were lubras or children to be fired upon.

The killing of the seventeen natives was reported to Coroner on Mounted Constable Murray's return from Darwin and the Coroner intended accompanying me to the scene, but on your telegraphed instructions to await arrival of your memorandum dated 9th November which reached here on 4th December, no inquest has yet been held.

As the Committee of investigation will have to be conveyed over the same route, I would like to have your opinion as to whether it is desirable to make a special trip with the Coroner - or to carry out the inquiry by the Coroner at the same time as the projected visit to the scene by the Investigating Committee. The Coroner could open and conclude his inquest prior to the deliberations of the Board. Will you please telegraph me on this matter.

H. Gawood

Government Resident.

Northern Territory



of Australia.

To all Constables of the Northern Territory and to all others whom these may concern.

I, the undersigned H. B. Wackington, being one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the Northern Territory of Australia, having made inquiries respecting the death of one Fredrick Brooks who died at Levee Camp near S.A. on the seventh day of August one thousand nine hundred and 98 do hereby certify that there is not, in my opinion, any necessity for holding an inquest upon the body of the said Fredrick Brooks, and that the said Fredrick Brooks may be buried.

Given under my hand the seventh day of August one thousand nine hundred and 98

H. B. Wackington J.P., Coroner. or one.

MEMO.—Please put on back of this Warrant the cause of death.

N.B.—Age 61 Occupation Prospector Last known place of abode of the deceased Levee Camp

Le 165

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
(CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.)



POSTAL ADDRESS:
"GOVRES," ALICE SPRINGS.

IN REPLY
PLEASE QUOTE

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT RESIDENT,
ALICE SPRINGS. 7th December 1928.

NO.

10 DEC 1928 AM

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

As requested in your lettergram of 3rd November,
I forward, herewith, Coroner's Certificate dispensing with an
inquest into the death of Frederick Brooks.

J. G. Sawood
Government Resident.

[217]

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.
(CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.)

ADDRESS:
"GOVRES," ALICE SPRINGS.

IN REPLY
PLEASE QUOTE

NO.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT RESIDENT,
ALICE SPRINGS. 8th December 1928.

His Honor,
The Government Resident,
Alice Springs.

re Natives killed by Police Party.

I have the honour respectfully to report that, after making general inquiries and perusing Mounted Constable Murray's report, I cannot understand why the natives killed Fred Brooks who was a very 'old inoffensive man and whom I have personally known since 1910. In the past, the natives have all spoken well of him.

From what I can gather, these natives had been killing quite a lot of stock in that locality and, in their cunning way, decided to kill Brooks to prevent him from informing the Police or Stock owners.

After killing Brooks, they took all his food and surplus clothing. I am sure this was not because they were starving as the natives in the North West and right down the Western side of Alice Springs are always fat and native foods of all descriptions are plentiful.

There have been continual complaints from the North West and West about natives killing stock and generally becoming cheeky and defiant but, owing to the small staff of Police Officers and the large districts, it has been impossible to patrol and get about these parts. I think several more Police Stations should be opened amongst these troublesome tribes.

Galol punishment does not appear to have the proper effect with the evil doers that it should have. I think, in the early days when a little cat o' nine tails was used in addition to the sentence, it had a better effect.

I understand that seventeen natives were killed by the party under M.C. Murray because they showed fight to the Police Party and were very hostile and defiant. The Police had to defend themselves with firearms or else go down like poor old Brooks which would never do as the next move by the natives would be the killing of the other scattered white settlers of Central Australia.

I deplore the killing of the natives as much as anyone but, at times, it cannot be avoided and the same thing has happened in the settling of all new countries. Lessons must be taught to people who murder others. My experience in nineteen years of out back life is that the settlers are very fair to the natives but stock and natives do not and will not thrive together and it can be seen at a glance by the restlessness and tucked-up look of the cattle when they are together.

If this country is to be settled with a healthy white population, we must give the pioneers every protection both for themselves and their stock otherwise the country must be left to the natives who have not the slightest idea of development in any shape or form.

C. H. Hoblet
Chief Protector of Aborigines.

28/10740 28



AUSTRALIAN NATIVES' ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL
BENEFIT
EDUCATIONAL
LITERARY

VICTORIAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Head Office
60 Queen Street
Melbourne.

AUSTRALIAN
IDEALS
PATRIOTISM
PROTECTION
PROGRESS

C.I. 12th December 1928.

IT IS

An All
Australian
Association

14 DEC 1928 A.M.

A Benefit
Mutual
Non-Party
Progressive
National
Society

Dear Sir,

Correspondence has been received from Branches of this Association in reference to the Press Reports of the recent shooting of aborigines, and I have been directed to request that you will furnish any information and details which may be available by your Department in this connection.

Thanking you in anticipation,

IT HAS

Huge Reserves
(Funds, £950,000)
Great Stability
(36,000 Members)

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]
General Secretary.

IT GIVES

Medical Attendance
Medicines
Sick Pay
Funeral Allowances
Endowments

IT WANTS

The Secretary,
Home & Territories Department,
CANBERRA.

EVERY

AUSTRALIAN

TO JOIN

ITS RANKS

SUPPORT YOUR COUNTRY. AND IT WILL SUPPORT YOU.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
(CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.)



ADDRESS:
"ALICE SPRINGS."

IN REPLY
PLEASE QUOTE

NO.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT RESIDENT,
ALICE SPRINGS. 12th December 1928

19 DEC 1928 P.M.

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

As requested in your lettergram of 17th
November, I forward herewith a report from the Chief Protector
of Aborigines in regard to the killing of natives by the
Police Party which was sent out to arrest the murderers of the
late T. Brooks.

H. Lawood

Government Resident.

*For information
J.P.S. 27
12
28*

*Seen
C.L.A. 24/12.28*

recovered and identified as that of Fred Brooks, deceased, consisting of tobacco, clothing, blankets, wallet, soap, tomahawk, straps, knife and papers. From enquiries I ascertained that some of the murderers were camped about fortyfive miles north west. We proceeded to the locality, located the camp. On approaching six male natives came out well armed with weapons, and ordered my party to leave. They refused to surrender without fighting. For a time we remained mounted and cautioned them of the consequence should they attempt to escape. Darkness was now approaching, and the natives commenced hostilities by throwing boomerangs and spears. My tracker narrowly avoided being struck by a boomerang. The position again appeared serious and I ordered one of my party to fire at the shield in a native's hand. The bullet split the shield and it fell to the ground. The infuriated natives attacked in earnest. Three were killed and three wounded taken prisoners they admitted having assisted in the murder and stated that the three killed had helped to murder Brooks. The three wounded received attention. They died from the result of the wounds the following day.

input
of your exact words
6 males
dead

-2- what language? from whom were they assisted?

I ascertained that other murderers had proceeded to Cockatoo Spring. We proceeded to the locality and located four natives fast disappearing over the cliffs. I divided my party and they moved quickly in various directions to cut off the escape of the fugitives. Myself and one tracker dismounted (the country being too rough for horse) and got within close quarters of the natives (two males and two females). They refused to be captured, made off over the rocks. We followed for some distance repeatedly called on them to stop, then fired. Both males were shot dead. The lubras stated that both males had assisted in killing Brooks. The dead had some of Brooks' property in their possession.

2 males
killed

I ascertained that a party of the murderers had made it the Western Australian border. Myself and party followed the tracks for several days. We overtook a party of natives consisting of four males and a number of lubras and children. They fled for the rocks and caves. Two hours were spent in endeavouring to persuade them to come out but without success. The supply of water in the small spring being inadequate for any number of horses, our only alternative was to remain and perish or our horses which had then been into the second day without water, or depart and leave the natives, so a final effort was made to capture the natives, the result being that three males were killed and one taken prisoner. We then returned to Coniston Station and arrived at Alice Springs on the 1/9/28 with two prisoners and one witness. The latter states definitely that he witnessed the murder being committed, that the first of the two lubras that was shot had proceeded to Brooks' camp and talked with him whilst the male natives were creeping close up behind cover. A signal was given by a movement of the hand from one native. The lubra then held Brooks and a number of natives rushed to the spot and committed ghastly deed. Furthermore, the witness identified the prisoners and those killed as having taken part in the murder.

3 lubras
killed

Is name
where did you
pick him up?

Was this
Lala?

The total distance travelled by myself and party being 846 miles.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Sgd.) G. Murray, M.C.

To
The Commissioner of Police

Alice Springs.

(Through Sgt. Noblet).

Police Station,
Alice Springs,

September 2nd, 1928.

Sir,

Re Fred Brooks, deceased, reported murdered by natives.

On the 12th ultimo I arrived at Coniston Station which is approximately on the 22nd parallel and sixty five miles west of the Overland Telegraph Line. I made enquiries relative to above, and ascertained that Brooks had left Coniston Station on the 3/8/28 with two camels and accompanied by two native boys of about twelve years of age.

Brooks camped at a spring fourteen miles west of Coniston Station. On the morning of the 7/8/28 the two boys went to bring the camels back to camp returning about an hour later they found a number of natives ransacking Brooks' camp, the natives informed the boys that the old man had died himself. They then assisted the boys to place the saddles on the camels, stripped them of their clothing and blankets and instructed them to proceed to Coniston Station with the camels. On arrival there, the boys informed other native employees what had happened. There being no white person at the station, a native employee proceeded to Bruce Chapmans Camp, twenty miles distant and reported the matter. Chapman proceeded to Brooks' camp and located the body of deceased. A mosquito net was wrapped around the head. The corpse was barely covered with earth. Upon examination, Chapman discovered that Brooks had been horribly mutilated especially about the head. He then reburied the body and reported the matter to the Police.

call the subcamp X

From enquiries I ascertained the names of twenty adult male aboriginals whom it is alleged were implicated in the murder. Furthermore, I was informed that the natives 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 Police.

Immediately on my arrival at Coniston Station I instructed my two trackers to guard the native camp at the station, and that no native be allowed to depart that may spread the news of my arrival. Should any new arrivals arrive they must be detained.

I obtained a plant of fourteen horses and necessary equipment, organised a party of eight, consisting of myself, R. Stafford, J. Saxby, W. Briscoe, A. Wilson and three natives.

On the 15.8.28 excited voices were heard in the camp. I hurried to ascertain the cause, and found my trackers endeavouring to arrest two powerful natives who had entered the camp well armed with weapons. It was quite evident that my trackers were over-matched. As I approached one native extricated himself from the tracker's hold and attacked me violently. The second one then got free and came to the first one's assistance. As the position appeared dangerous, I drew my revolver and fired on one native. The bullet fractured the skull above the left temple and rendered him unconscious for two hours. The remaining one was secured in chains, and the wounded prisoner died fourteen days later.

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On the 16/8/28, myself and party proceeded to the locality where the murderers were supposed to be. On nearing the camp, I instructed my party to guard the outskirts of the camp, thus avoiding the escape of any native. Myself closely followed by a tracker entered the camp. The natives immediately assembled in some low scrub. One native only appeared to be armed with a boomerang and shield. I dismounted with a view to disarming the native. They immediately attacked, having had their weapons concealed on the grass. Realising the danger of my position, I fired. The report attracted the attention of the remainder of my party who were quickly on the scene. Five natives were killed, including two Lubras. After order was restored, the camp was searched, a quantity of property was

3 natives killed

Associations and persons interested in native races
who have written to the Department regarding shooting
of aboriginals in Central Australia.

Norman Makin, M.P.

Asking for information.

Mr. Bleakley, Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Queensland.

Reporting statement made to him at Katherine by Miss Lock, of Harding's Soak.

W. Langdon Parsons, M.P.

Asking for information.

Reverend Athol McGregor, Katherine.

Protesting against shooting of natives, and asking for full inquiry.

General Secretary, Methodist Mission, Sydney, (Rev. Mr. Burton).

Referring to report received by him from McGregor and asking whether Department intends make fullest inquiry.

Association for Protection of Native Races, Gordon.

Asking Prime Minister whether he would permit representative of Association to be appointed a member of Commission of Inquiry into shooting of natives. Also asking that Prime Minister make public declaration of Government's policy and intentions on subject of treatment of aboriginals.

26.11.28

Methodist Inland Mission, Melbourne.

Supporting request by McGregor for inquiry, and asking that the scope of inquiry be broad with a view to framing a national policy in respect of the treatment of aboriginals.

Women's Non-Party Association of South Australia.

Requesting inquiry into shooting of aboriginals.

Australian Aborigines Mission, Waverley, N.S.W.

Asking that full and exhaustive inquiries be made into the shooting of aboriginals.

Copy. EC.

The Deponent,

upon his Oath saith as follows:-

Lala (Native cautioned through half-caste Interpreter Alick Wilson).

I know the two prisoners, Padygar and Akirkra. I was camped at the Spring where Fred Brookes was camped. I saw from some distance off the two prisoners help to kill Fred Brookes. They used Yam Sticks and Akirkra used a tomahawk. I also saw them assist to carry the body away. They placed a bag over him and covered him up in a rabbit hole. They then took Brookes' rations, flour, tea, sugar and other rations out of his boxes, also one shirt, also one blanket. They hunted the camels away the night previous so Brookes' boys would be out longer hunting for them the following morning. When the two boys of Brookes did return the next morning, the natives helped to put the packs on and send them into Coniston station, having previously stripped the two boys Dodger and Skipper, of their clothing and blankets.

Previous to murdering Fred Brookes, a lubra was sent to his camp and held him whilst the natives killed him. The lubra's name was Marunali. The lubra has visited the Missionary's camp on the Woodforde many times. This was the lubra that was shot at the first camp.

His ^{Lala} X mark
native.

The above deposition of Lala, Native, was taken and sworn before me at Alice Springs in the said State, on the day and year first above mentioned.

(Sgd.) E. Allchurch
Special Magistrate.

+ This witness does not mention that there were some 20 abos camped here side runway

The Deponent,

Upon his Oath saith as follows :-

He then showed me the spot where the body was buried, also uncovered traces of blood within a few yards of the burial place.

I then formally arrested the two prisoners Padygar and Akirkra, charged them with the murder of Fred Brooks and brought them into Alice Springs.

(Sgd.) G. Murray.

The above deposition of William George Murray was taken and sworn before me at Alice Springs in the said State, on the day and year first above mentioned.

(Sgd.) W. Allchurch.

Special Magistrate.

Copy. EC.

The Deponent

on his Oath saith as follows:-

William George Murray Mounted Constable in-charge Barrow Creek. In consequence of a report received re Fred Brooks having been murdered by natives, I proceeded to Coniston Station arriving there on the 12th August. I ascertained that Fred Brooks had been camped at a spring about 12 miles west of Coniston Station, they he had been brutally murdered and the body placed in a rabbit burrow. I then ascertained the names of 20 natives who had been camped at the time of the murder at the same spring. I then proceeded to the locality and arrested Prisoner Padygar. He stated that he had killed the old man so as to get possession of his flour and tobacco. I took him to the scene of the murder. He showed me where Brooks had been camped and stated that Brooks had been sitting down repairing pack bags when a number of natives including himself, crept up behind cover. They then rushed the old man and beat him to death with boomerangs, yam sticks and tomahawks. He then scraped in the sand and handed me cakes of dry blood which he stated had bled from the old man, and had been covered with sand by natives. He then showed me to the burrow where they had buried the body. He also scraped in the sand and showed me some dry blood which had bled from the body whilst they were preparing the grave. I then ascertained the names of other natives who had assisted in the murder, and left the vicinity and gone west. I followed their tracks for sixty miles and overtook them at a place known as Granite Boulders. The natives showed fight. Several natives were shot. The native prisoner named Akirkra was arrested. He stated that he had helped kill the old man. I brought him back to the scene of the murder. He showed me where Brooks had been camped and uncovered dry blood from the sand, which he stated had come from the old man.

(Sgd.) G. Murray.

The above deposition of William George Murray, was taken and sworn before me at Alice Springs in the said Stats. on the day and year first above mentioned.

(Sgd.) E. Allchurch, Special Magistrate.

*Police reports
of your notes
as to names*

*How many of
who they*

Copy. EC.

[225]

Broadmeadows Station,
via Ti-Tree Well
30th August, 1928.

To
The Sergeant of Police,
ALICE SPRINGS.

Dear Sir,

I hereby make a report to you of an attack by Blacks on me with intent to murder, without any provocation whatever on my part. The following is what happened.

I left our main camp on August 27th to go down to have a look at water in waterhole, and look around cattle we have running there, which is 27 miles from said main camp. On arrival there, I found a big mob of blacks camped there, and after being in conversation with one, I noticed he seemed excited, and this made me a bit suspicious, thinking they may have been killing cattle, and as there was so many there, I did not care to camp in my usual camp, so watered horses and filled up canteens, and went and camped out about a mile out, and in the morning about sunrise, I was sitting down having my breakfast when three came to my camp, which I know pretty well, and wanted tobacco and meat. I was handing a bit of meat to one, when he suddenly slipped behind me and pinned both arms. Then the other two rushed in to give him a hand. At the same time, I noticed a number of blacks rush out from behind ti-tree towards me, and as my revolver was on my swag some yards distant, I fought my way to swag to get it, and while doing so, I had been struck several heavy blows on the head. By this time, the blacks were all around me, throwing boomerangs and belting with nulla nullas. These knocks just about had me settled, and in a very dazed condition, when I managed to get my revolver, and after firing several shots, I noticed the blacks raced away. After tying up my wounds to stop bleeding, I staggered blindly and got my horses and packed up and managed to get back to main camp in a very weak state from bruises and loss of blood.

I would like you to send out a party to arrest the culprits. If you decide to send one, they will want camels, as horses will be no good. I am now at Ti-tree well and will wait a few days to get your reply.

(As dictated to me by W. Morton as he is unable to write owing to bruised hand.)

Yours faithfully

(Sgd.) B.S. Sandford

for W. Morton.

*find photo
of blacks
at camped
did you
tell to
any?*

*Why did you not mention
you shot one?
What was your reason?
Did you think it was of sufficient importance?
* Identification*

*You were with Murray when the natives were pursued - Give me in
your own words an account of the chase!*

[226]

Morton attacked at August
Police Station,
Alice Springs.
October 19th, 1928.
Sir, if weeks after identifying

Attack on W. Morton by natives.

I have the honor to respectfully report having arrived at Broadmeadows Station on the 24/9/28 and made inquiries relative to the above. I ascertained that an attack had been well planned to take Morton's life. About fourteen were implicated in the attack. Owing no doubt to Morton's supreme strength, the attack failed, and one native was shot by Morton, and the remainder made off, leaving Morton seriously injured about the head and body. The injuries received medical attention, and the victim is now sufficiently recovered to attend to his usual duties.

was he wounded or killed

who from

who left

I then set out to endeavour to arrest the culprits. Their tracks were followed for several hundred miles, and several small parties of natives were overtaken enroute. A number were recognized by Morton who accompanied me on the journey, as his assailants. In almost every instance the natives assembled upon my approach, and adopted a hostile attitude. They refused to part with their weapons, although cautioned of the consequences should they resist. The natives were heard to instruct their lubras and children to run so as to enable them to fight. Unfortunately drastic action had to be taken, and resulted in a number of male natives being shot. On two occasions when small parties of natives had been rounded up, Morton pointed out some culprits. A few refused to lay down their weapons. I instructed my party to stand by their rifles in readiness whilst I dismounted with a view of disarming and arresting them. In each case the natives resisted violently and fought viciously. I beat them off for a few minutes, and killed two with their own weapons. As the position appeared too serious, I called on my assistants to fire. Unfortunately a number of natives were killed. Myself and party then returned to Broadmeadows Station. It is still believed that several of the culprits are still at large, and have made in the direction of Powell's Creek.

Describe

who carried

who shot

how many

I shot where was Morton?

The plea put forward on behalf of the natives by people who are not fully conversant with the native in the back country, that the natives are being forced to such crimes as have been committed in this Territory recently, and that they are being driven in owing to the drying up of waters and the scarcity of native foods is incorrect. I have travelled thousands of miles during the past few months through the back and almost unknown country among the hostile blacks, and throughout the whole of my travel I found native food to exist in profusion. With fourteen horses, I found ample water to supply my horses and party with an abundant supply of water several times a day. For the last ten days myself and party existed solely on native food, our supply having given out.

11

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant;

To the Commissioner of Police, (Sgd.) G. Murnay, M.C.
Alice Springs.
(through Sgt. Noblet).

Respectfully forwarded to His honor the Government Resident for Central Australia for your information.

(Sgd.) C.H. Noblet. Sergeant.

20.10.28.

Forwarded to the Honourable, The Minister for Home and Territories, for his information.

(Sgd.) J.C. Gawron

Government

[228]

GOVRES

ALICE SPRINGS

YOURS
MAIL
BROOKES

ELEVENTH
REPORT

PLEASE
REGARDING

FURNISH
MURDER

FIRST
FREDERICK

HOMETER

20.8.28.

full particulars regarding Morton's case, and also that of Tilmouth, your 150/28, together with your observations thereon, and any other information which, in the light of the foregoing, would be of assistance to the Minister in connection with the matter. The latter should include, if possible, statements by Messrs. Morton and Tilmouth as to the facts in their cases.

This Department is at a loss to understand the sudden change in the attitude of the aboriginals of Central Australia towards white men. Unusual circumstances appear to be attached to the cases of the attacks on Brookes, Morton and Tilmouth, in that they have all been reported by Constable Murray, and have occurred recently and within a comparatively short time, while nothing of a similar nature had been previously reported for some years.

If you are aware of the reasons for the apparent sudden outbreak of hostility on the part of the aboriginals, they might be quoted.

In the circumstances of these cases, it is possible that, to satisfy public demand, an investigation by a specially appointed authority may be called for. With this possibility in view, will you be so good as to advise me what would be involved in the nature of travelling, outfit etc., to ensure that all evidence, which it is practicable to obtain, could be secured.

As indicative of the public interest likely to be aroused in the matter, I subjoin copies of two telegrams which, amongst other communications, have been received:-

"Darwin, 9th November, 1928.

"Desire lodge protest as local representative of Methodist Church against action of police party re Brookes murder case as revealed at Court seventeen killings men and women over period many days every shot sent to kill reveals ferocious spirit Request full inquiry.

Athol McGregor, Katherine. "

"Sydney, 9th November.

"Have received alarming report from Mission representatives Darwin regarding killing of natives by police stop Before I call my Board together to make protest can you inform me whether Department intends make fullest inquiry.

Burton, General Secretary, Methodist Mission. "

(Sgd.) W. J. CLEMENS.

Secretary.

Copy.

28/8588.

CANBERRA. 9th November, 1928.

His Honour,
The Government Resident
of Central Australia,
ALICE SPRINGS.

With reference to your memorandum, No. 149/28, I desire to invite attention to the following statements made in the report of the 19th October by M.C. Murray, in regard to the action taken by him to arrest the aboriginals implicated in the attack upon Mr. W. Morton:-

"Unfortunately drastic action had to be taken, and resulted in a number of male natives being shot."

"Unfortunately a number of natives were killed."

It is hardly necessary to comment on the serious aspect of the killing of aboriginals by Government parties. This Department must accept as one of its responsibilities the protection and guardianship of all native races in Territories coming within its jurisdiction, and in cases where aboriginals have suffered by reason of action either by Government parties or some other agency, the Minister must be satisfied that justification exists for the action taken.

A number of requests have already been made the Department for details of the recent killing of aboriginals in Central Australia and representations have been addressed to the Minister by persons and Associations interested in the welfare of native races.

To enable the Minister to give careful consideration to the question of whether the recent killing of aboriginals in Central Australia was justified, and to reply to the inquiries and representations that have been made to the Department it is essential that he should be furnished with full and accurate details of the incidents.

Full particulars should be furnished 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, the action taken by the Coroner in regard to such reports. Confirmation should be obtained, wherever possible, of the statements made by officers or persons connected with parties responsible for the killing of aboriginals.

Statements such as those quoted from the report by Constable Murray are of too indefinite a nature to be of any assistance to the Minister.

In considering the report by Constable Murray in regard to the action taken by him to arrest the aboriginals implicated in the attack on Mr. Morton, it is noted that it is unaccompanied by any observations by yourself which might be of assistance to the Minister in arriving at a decision as to whether the killing of the aboriginals was justified, or helpful in replying to inquiries addressed to this office regarding the matter.

You will, of course, recognise that, as the representative of the Government in Central Australia, the Minister would naturally look to the Government Resident for advice and authentic information regarding all important happenings in the Territory.

Full details in connection with the incident of the Brookes case have already been asked for and I shall be glad if you will kindly furnish me, at the earliest possible date, with

/s/ Mull

[231]

produce the statements

-2-

I will endeavour to get statements from each of the members of the party accompanying M.C. Murray, but it will be some weeks before I can interview them. I have every reason to believe M.C. Murray's reports to be truthful in detail. I explained to him that when furnishing a report nothing was to be kept back. I recognise that when the Minister is not in possession of full facts, he is placed in a false position when replying to criticisms.

(Sgd.) J.C. CAWOOD.

Government Resident.

Copy.

[232]

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.
(CENTRAL AUSTRALIA).

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT RESIDENT,
ALICE SPRINGS. 25th October, 1928.

153/28.

The Secretary,
Home and Territories Department,
CANBERRA.

With reference to your memorandum of 28th September No. 28/8588, which reached me to-day, I have to report that I have had interviews with various settlers on the incidents leading up to and following the murder of Frederick Brookes by blacks.

call these settlers
Since taking up duties in March 1927, there have been continuous complaints from white settlers as to the depredations of the blacks. The police have constantly been investigating 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.

to whom
The result of this delay has been accepted by the natives as a sign of weakness on the part of the administration of law and order, consequently the natives 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. *to whom? call them*

call for reports
In ordinary cases of cattle killing by what may be termed "civilised natives", arrests have been effected without loss of life, because the civilised native submits to capture and recognises the authority of the Administration.

The position is quite different as regards the "Myall". He resents the intrusion of the white, whether he be police 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 other members of the party.

The uncivilised native has no respect for the sanctity of human life, as instanced by the number of well planned attacks on the white settlers so frequent of late. The recent unfortunate happenings are only a repetition of history as regards the colonisation and development of lands formerly held by colored races.

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 my notice the attacks by the blacks have been unprovoked, their one idea being to kill and loot.

No one regrets the shooting of the blacks more than I do, but 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. *is this the reason of the shooting?*

In the opinion of old residents of this part, 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. In their opinion the only other alternative was to hand the country back to the blacks. *(does the mission they either long) (do. he mean the property)*

I am firmly of the opinion that the result of recent action by the police will have the right effect upon the natives, and while regretting the necessity for extreme measures, the fact remains that the natives brought the trouble on themselves.

My instructions to M.C. Murray were definite to avoid bloodshed as much as possible, but under no circumstances to jeopardise the lives of the police party.

/s/ will

After further consideration and a general discussion, Inspector Johns brought forward the name of Mr. Lionel C.E. Gee, who was at one time a Warden in the Mines Department on the Goldfields in Central Australia. He was actually in the District in which the killing is supposed to have taken place. So far as he was aware, it would be about 17 years since Warden Gee left the District, but he considers that if a person with Magisterial experience were necessary he would place Warden Gee second to Inspector Giles. Gen. Leane is unacquainted with Warden Gee and could not express an opinion, but said he was prepared to accept Inspector Johns' recommendation in regard to the matter.

I have made personal inquiries regarding Mr. Gee and learn that he is now 74½ years of age. He was retired from the State Service at the age of 70. It was stated that if he had anything to do with aboriginals it would have been about 30 or 40 years ago when he was a Surveyor in the Survey Dept., and also later when he was Warden of Goldfields.

I have not interviewed Warden Gee for the reason that in my opinion a man of 74½ years would be too old for such an inquiry.

If the appointment of a Police Officer of the S.A. Service would be acceptable to the Commonwealth Govt., I am satisfied, after my interview with Gen. Leane and Inspector Johns, that Inspector Giles would be an excellent man for appointment to conduct such an inquiry. If, however, it is thought inadvisable to employ a Police Officer, I could make further inquiries as to the most suitable Magistrate available, but feel that I must support the view taken by Gen. Leane that the person selected to carry out the inquiries should have had actual personal experience in the Northern Territory and acquaintance with the blacks in those parts.

Should you desire any further information regarding the Magistrates, and advise me, I will make inquiries and let you know without any loss of time.

15/11/28.

(Sgd.) G.E. WILLSON. "

(Commonwealth Public Service Inspector,
Adelaide)

CONFIDENTIAL.

"To-day, upon receipt of your letter of the 13th inst., in respect of the killing of a number of aboriginals, following upon the murder of a white man named Brookes, I interviewed Brig.-General Leane, the Commissioner of Police here, and a personal friend of mine, and under a bond of confidence read to him portions of your letter, asking the General if he could suggest a suitable officer of the S.A. Govt., to undertake inquiries in the event of such being necessary.

General Leane said that if he were required to make an appointment for the purpose under consideration his selection would unhesitatingly be that of Police Inspector P. Giles, Police Officer in Charge of the Northern portion of South Australia, stationed at Port Augusta. He is 51 years of age, has had about 30 years' service. Commenced as a Trooper; was many years Clerk of Courts in different places, mostly in parts inhabited by aborigines, and is at the present time Prosecuting Officer in North Australia for the S.A. Govt. His District extends from the W.A. border to the Queensland border and connects at Oodnadatta with the Territorial Service.

Prior to the Commonwealth taking over he also controlled that part of the Territory now under the Commonwealth.

General Leane regards Inspector Giles as a well educated, fearless man, with a sound well-balanced mind who thoroughly understands the natives and their conditions of life, including those in the actual District in which the reported trouble has occurred.

General Leane informed me if the services of Inspector Giles were asked for he would immediately make him available for the Commonwealth Government. I pointed out to the General that "the man in the street" might view the appointment of a Police Officer with some suspicion and feel that any report furnished might be framed with the object of "whitewashing" the Police Force. I asked him if he could suggest a Magistrate with the necessary qualifications to undertake such an inquiry.

After carefully reviewing the claims of all the present Magistrates, General Leane definitely stated that there was not one of them with the required experience amongst the blacks. He pointed out that it is absolutely essential the person selected must have a wide knowledge of the conditions under which the Police work in those distant parts, otherwise the Police Officers would probably not receive fair treatment in the investigation.

General Leane then suggested to me that Inspector Johns, who was in the Metropolitan area at the present time, had had wide experience in the Northern Territory, and amongst the blacks, might be consulted with a view to obtaining the name of any suitable officer whom Gen. Leane might have overlooked. I agreed and he called Inspector Johns in, and under a bond of confidence revealed to him the nature of my visit and asked him who he would suggest to hold such an inquiry. Inspector Johns immediately stated that, with the exception of himself, there was only one man that he knew of, and he named Inspector Giles.

/After further

STATEMENT "D".

Comments received from Government Resident.

[235]

Produce these reports

Police reports

- (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. *(which complaints)*
- (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, *who are the persons* 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.

Query?

Just 4-5 days ago that in 6 years 17 Police killed 2 aboriginals killed by them call (hangs)

produce the reports

who are the persons

and multiall the

[236]

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.

[237]

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.

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

Have these statements been taken

(3-males)

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

was the the 24th man ^{tried to} capture

STATEMENT "B".

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.

Morton accompanied Murray on this expedition, but otherwise the composition of the party is not stated. (who was it?)

*Had Morton and
seen his assailants
before they attacked*

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. (Do this in a separate item to the 14?)

not at all

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. (Is this in addition to the 14?)

*Produce
Police journals*

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.

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.

Who from?

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.

bullet (male)

Was he one of the 2?

where situated

3 males 2 females

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.

who were with?

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.

How did he caution himself?

6 killed 3 males

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.

who from

(6-10)

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

Statement 'g' was a confidential report regarding the fitness of Inspector Giles & was not taken off the file

A further case of an attack on a white man occurred soon after. A white settler named Morton 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 Ti-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

These are notes made
by the Home Dept a summary
up of the position

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.G.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 chignons. 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 skins of which they neither use nor export. But this is not all, they have just killed Brookes; and ask Urdunda, Tempe, and other centres and it will be apparent that they are a real annoyance, if not a menace, to the brave taxpayers on the fringes of the Reserves."

It appears evident that the blacks who have been concerned in the recent tragedies are of the class described in the report. They are believed to have been strangers to the district and to have arrived there from the Western Australian border. Some months back the settlers in this district complained of depredations by aboriginals, and requested police assistance. Reports were made of the killing of cattle, sheep and goats, and the settlers were feeling apprehensive of further trouble. At the time these complaints were received news came of the murder of an old man named Brookes, a dingo shooter. Brookes, while sitting alone in his camp was approached by a lubra who asked for food. While his attention was engaged with the woman, at a signal from her, a number of blacks, estimated at 20, came up from behind, and while the lubra held his arms, battered 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 further

Look up
Newspapers