

XXXXXXX

IS.

XXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXX

CANBERRA.

XXXXXXXX 9th November, 1928.

8188.  
28/9249

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 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

*Handwritten notes:*  
The report...  
4/11/28

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 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.

Secretary.

XXXXXXXXXXXX  
 CANBERRA.  
 XXXXXXXXXXXX 9th November, 1928.

5588  
 28/9249

His Honour  
 The Government Resident  
 of Central Australia.

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/You will

*Completed on  
 28/11/28*

[66]

GOVRES

9/11/28

ALICE SPRINGS.

QOPFUPPEZAI	JUYVEADWAB	HAYVAUGHFA	KROTSETTYM	TREBIKUBAV
TAMOHGAFHI	ULIHGUUVUDO	BHMYSIWIW	ABZUGTYPIM	FUXAEAMRIP
QLOVBVRYLF	CEYOILLEIAD	EJVUYLLEYC	GAFMISPYRE	DEYAVJARCY
HRIDURYESP	UNVUEGAFHI	ULIHGOZIBE	AMRIPGHUVY	URUYXSQUYA
GATHIMIQMO	KROTSULOED	<del>XXXXXXXXXX</del>		

Decode.

Press reports indicate acquittal followed upon Judges direction to Jury that evidence was without corroboration. Absence of trackers and Brookes two boys left Crown little evidence support case. Immediate report desired showing what evidence was relied upon and explanation why supporting evidence mentioned by Judge was not available.

*Handwritten initials*

HOMETER.

At  
The Picnic

Several aboriginals were killed by M.C. Murray's party when endeavoring to arrest murders of Boobies.

20  
names  
to be  
checked  
& revised  
where  
reported  
1914

Several aboriginals were killed by the same Comtable's party, in connection with the advent of aboriginals who attacked Norton.

The attached despatch refers to the killing of another aboriginal.

It seems strange that all these attacks should happen recently, when the Territory has been quiet for a number of years.

Mc  
8/11/14

Archie and any reference to  
Cormer & Company Allen. 11/11/14

E.T. NO. 2.

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

# RECEIVED TELEGRAM.

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

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

SYDNEY 45 3 40pm 9th

OFFICE DATE STAMP

Sent at

C'cl No.

By



Remarks.

9 NOV 1928 P.M.

To

SE-CTY

HOME AND TERRITORIES

CANBERRA

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

*The time received at this Office is shown at the foot of the Form.*  
Sch. C.237/1928.—C.M. 50.—D.2028

HAVE RECEIVED ALARMING REPORT FROM MISSION REPRESENTATIVES DARWIN REGARDING KILLING OF NATIVE-SBY POLICE STOP BEFORE I CALL MY BOARD TOGETHER TO MAKE PROTEST CAN YOU INFORM ME WHETHER DEPT INTENDS MAKE FULLEST ENQUIRY

BURTON GENERAL SECRETARY METHODIST MISSION.

4 5pmM

ET. No. 2.

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

# RECEIVED TELEGRAM.

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

STATIONS FROM: DARWIN 50 9 10a 9th      WORDS:      TIME AND DATE LODGED:      No. 29.



DARWIN 50 9 10a 9th

Remarks.

To DEPARTMENT HOME AND TERRITORIES  
CANBERRA.

9 NOV 1928 A.M.

*This message has been received subject to the Post and Telegraph Act and Regulations.  
The time received at this Office is shown at the foot of the Form.  
Sch. C.37/1928.—C.6.36.—B.2028.*

DESIRE LODGE PROTEST AS LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF METHODIST CHURCH  
 AGAINST ACTION OF POLICE PARTY RE BROOKS 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.      12 9gj

*Handwritten notes and scribbles at the bottom of the page, including a signature and some illegible text.*

710

**Burton**  
General Secretary Methodist Mission  
SYDNEY. 10.11.28

Yours ninth received matter is receiving close attention and full inquiries are being made for the consideration of the Minister and decision as to any necessary subsequent action.

*Wm. Tennant*  
*Wm*



Athol McGregor  
KATHERINE.

10.11.28 (North Australia)

Yours ninth received matter is receiving close attention and full inquiries are being made for the consideration of the Minister and decision as to any necessary subsequent action.

*Norm Tanton*  
125

Abd. ... .. by ... ..

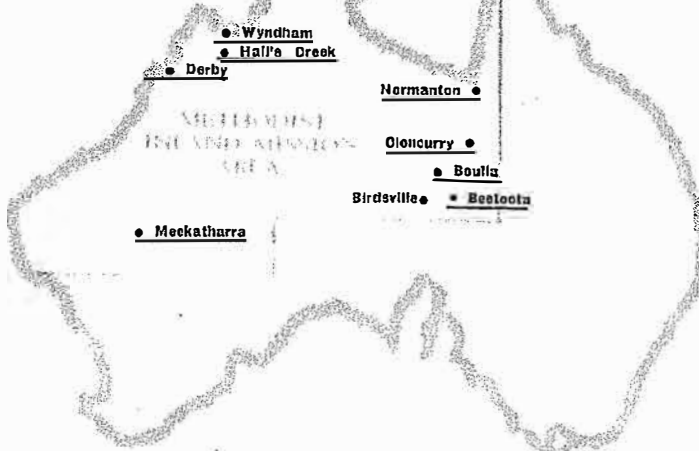
28/10/40

12



AUSTRALASIAN METHODIST CHURCH

METHODIST INLAND MISSION



Melbourne, (VICTORIA)

12/11/28

The Secretary,  
Home & Territories Department  
CANBERRA.

17 NOV 1928 A.M.

M.I.M.

Members of the Board  
President-General  
Secretary-General

Queensland  
President of Conference.  
General Secretary (H.M.)  
Lay Treasurer (H.M.)  
Mr. E. Procter.

New South Wales  
President of Conference.  
General Secretary (H.M.)  
Home Mission Secretary.  
Lay Treasurer (H.M.)  
Mr. P. N. Slade.

South Australia  
President of Conference.  
General Superintendent (H.M.)  
Lay Treasurer (H.M.)  
Mr. A. T. Wreford.

West Australia  
President of Conference.  
General Secretary (H.M.)  
Lay Treasurer (H.M.)  
Mr. A. Crawford.

Tasmania  
Chairman of Assembly.  
Home Mission Secretary.  
Lay Treasurer (H.M.)  
Mr. F. Tyson.

Victoria  
Home Mission Executive.

Convener  
REV. A. T. HOLDEN,  
C.B.E., D.A.,  
73 Walspole Street, Kew,  
Victoria,  
to whom all correspondence  
for the Board should be  
forwarded.

Dear Sir,

Information has reached us by telegraph from our representative Mr. A. D. McGregor, whose headquarters are at Katherine, N.A., that he has forwarded a request to your Department for an enquiry into ~~to~~ the alleged shooting recently of 17 aborigines in Central Australia.

On the grounds of our confidence in Mr. McGregor's veracity we desire to support his request, at the same time clearly stating that we have no information, except what has appeared in the press, concerning the circumstances or facts of this case, and, therefore, we do not express any opinion upon it.

While not necessarily identifying ourselves with the views of Mr. McGregor on the general subject of the treatment of aborigines we trust that the scope of any enquiry will be broad with a view to the framing of some national policy that will be satisfactory to all sections of the community.

We shall be obliged if you will bring this letter under the notice of the Minister, or of his responsible officer, in charge of this section of affairs.

On behalf of the Board, I have the honour to be  
Yours faithfully,

*J. H. ...*

783

CR.

GOVERNMENT RESIDENT.

ALICE SPRINGS.

12/11/28

LETTERGRAM

YOUR	ONE	FIVE	NOUGHT	STROKE
TWENTY-EIGHT	TILMOUTH	HAS	KILLING	OF
NATIVE	BEEN	REPORTED	TO	CORONER
AND	IF	SO	WHAT ACTION	WAS
TAKEN				

HOMETER

*JK*

*R/s 19  
11/28*

IS.

13th November, 1928.

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.

Notes:- 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.

E.T. NO. 2.

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

# RECEIVED TELEGRAM.

The first line of this Telegram contains the following particulars in the order named.  
STATION FROM.                      WORDS.                      TIME AND DATE LODGED.                      No.



Remarks.

To

*This message has been received subject to the Post and Telegraph Act and Regulations.*  
*The time received at this Office is shown at the foot of the Form.*  
 Sch. C.337/1928.—C.M.S.—B.2028.

OF ENQUIRY PLEASE REPLY SECRETARY THOMAS STREET GORDON  
 PRESIDENT G F EARP M L C SECRETARY REV W MORLEY (ENDS)  
 WAD EARLY ADVICE .

DEANE ORIENTAL HOTEL

2 55gj

*Handwritten notes:*  
 No. 11  
 V. C. S. C.  
 defense  
 [scribbles]

E.T. No. 2.

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

# RECEIVED TELEGRAM.

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

STATION	FROM.	WORDS.	TIME AND DATE LODGED.	No.
	1 PUBLIC OFFICES MELBOURNE	80	2 30pm 13th	46



Remarks.

To

SECRETARY HOME AND TERRITORIES

13 NOV 1928 P.M.

CANBERRA.

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

*The time received at this Office is shown at the foot of the Form. Sch. C.237/1928.—C.G.S.G.—B.5028.*

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM RECEIVED BY PRIME MINISTER (BEGINS)

IN VIEW OF SERIOUS REVELATIONS AT TRIAL OF ABORIGINES FOR MURDER  
 IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA AND ALLEGED SHOOTING OF SEVENTEEN ABORIGINES BY  
 POLICE WILL PRIME MINISTER PERMIT REPRESENTATIVE OF ASSOCIATION FOR  
 PROTECTION OF NATIVE RACES BEING APPOINTED A MEMBER OF COMMISSION

[77]

Percy Deane  
Oriental Hotel

MELBOURNE. 13.11.28

Yours to-day matter is being made subject of full inquiry by  
Department stop If determined that circumstances warrant special  
investigation request of Association will be taken into consideration  
in determining personnel of investigating authority.

*Chambers*  
*eds*

*See with  
papers.*

E.T. No. 6.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

No. 5-21 [78]

POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

RECEIVED ~~PRESS~~ TELEGRAM.



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

The time received at this office is shown after the signature.

Sch. C.337.—7/1923

1/1890/7.28.—C.5925

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

STATION FROM. WORDS. CHARGE. TIME and DATE LODGED. REMARKS.

1 BOURKE ST EAST MELBOURNE. 177 1-41pm 15th.

SECRETARY HOME & TERRITORIES  
CANBERRA.

FOLLOWING TELEGRAMS RECEIVED BY PRIME MINISTER DATED 14th GORDON SYDNEY  
ONE BEGINS AT MEETING TODAY OF EXECUTIVE ASSOCIATION PROTECTION NATIVE  
RACES RESOLVED TELEGRAPH PRIME MINISTER NECESSITY FOR IMMEDIATE ENQUIRY  
BY COMPETENT OFFICIAL OR TRIBUNAL INTO RECENT SHOOTINGS OF NATIVES BY  
COMMONWEALTH POLICE IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA WHICH HAS DEEPLY SHOCKED THE  
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION FURTHER POINTS OUT THAT LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION  
IN HIS POLICY SPEECH PROMISED ADEQUATE TREATMENT OF ABORIGINES ON  
FEDERAL BASIS ON LINES ADVOCATED BY OUR ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE HOPES  
PRIME MINISTER WILL IMMEDIATELY MAKE PUBLIC DECLARATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
POLICY AND INTENTIONS IN THIS IMPORTANT MATTER SIGNED W MORLEY ENDS  
TWO BEGINS ASSOCIATION PROTECTION NATIVE RACES LEARNS WITH SURPRISE  
AND HORROR OF THE CONTINUED DISGRACEFUL CONDITIONS OBTAINING IN THE  
LAZARET AT DARWIN AND REGRETS THAT THOUGH THESE CONDITIONS HAVE BEEN  
POINTED OUT TO DEPARTMENT HOME AND TERRITORIES NOTHING HAS BEEN  
DONE TO RELIEVE THE POSITION OF THE UNFORTUNATE ABORIGINALS SIGNED  
W MORLEY (ENDS) TELEGRAM WAS SENT TO MORLEY YESTERDAY ON LINES  
SUGGESTED YOUR TELEGRAM IN REPLY HIS TELEGRAM OF TWELFTH.

DEANE.

2-10p vw.

15 NOV 1928 P.M.



Gen. 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 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.

I am glad to say we are all well and settling down to conditions in Adelaide. Mr. Rogers is well and we both reciprocate your kind regards and trust that you and yours are well and liking Canberra.

Yours sincerely,

*G. E. Willson*

P.S. I dictated this to Mr. Rogers late this afternoon, and as I will be out of town all day to-morrow I have arranged with him to type it and sign it on my behalf.

*G. E. Willson*

*2795*



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

PUBLIC SERVICE INSPECTOR,

POST OFFICE PLACE, ADELAIDE,  
15th November 1928.

600-1.28 9324

My dear Clemens,

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.

Gen. 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.

Gen. Leane informed me if the services of Inspector Giles were asked for he would immediately make him available for the Commonwealth Govt. 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, Gen. 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.

W. J. Clemens, Esq.  
Secretary, Home & Territories Dept.  
C A N B E R R A. F.C.T.

(2)

to their own district, for it is no light thing for an aboriginal to have to travel hundreds of miles, without protection or food supplies, through country inhabited by hostile tribes.

Therefore in the interests of justice and humanity, the Association trusts that you and your department will favourably consider the requests contained in this letter,

Yours faithfully,

*Blanche Stephens.*  
Hon. Secretary.

[52]

Women's Non-Party Association  
of South Australia  
(League of Women Voters)

Affiliated with Australian Federation of Women Voters.

*President:*

Mrs. W. H. Lewis, B.A.

*Secretary:*

Miss Blanche Stephens  
(Tel. Central 5994)

HARVARD CHAMBERS,  
198 NORTH TERRACE,

ADELAIDE, 16th November 1928

The Honorable Sir Neville Howse,  
Minister for Home and Territories,  
Canberra, F.C.T.

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the Women's Non-Party Association I am writing to protest against the shooting of Aborigines by the police in the Alice Springs District. The ruthless killing of 17 natives, including women, as a reprisal for the murder of one white man, is an utterly unwarranted barbarous proceeding, and is a slur on the name of British justice which tends to bring us into disgrace with the civilized nations of the world. Moreover, it makes the sane government and control of the natives more difficult. The strictures of the magistrate at Darwin who tried and acquitted the two aborigines who were arrested for the crime of killing Mr. Brooks, indicate that there is something drastically wrong in the methods used when dealing with these people. To show that such conduct is not condoned by the Parliament or people of this country, an official enquiry should be held to go into the whole matter, and this the Association ~~strongly~~ strongly urges. It also urges that the two men who were taken to Darwin to be tried, should be returned



Lettergram

Squad. Reservist

Admiral Service

✓ 2 9 2 shooting - ✓

6 7 - 7 - 2 1 1 2

✓ 2

Attacks on White men 14

184



Government Resident  
Alice Springs

17/11/28

LETTERGRAM

MY MEMORANDUM NINTH NOVEMBER SHOOTING  
OF ABORIGINALS PLEASE ALSO OBTAIN AND  
FORWARD REPORT BY PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINALS REGARDING MATTER.

*OK* HOMETER.

E.T. No. 2.

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

# RECEIVED TELEGRAM.

The first line of this Telegram contains the following particulars in the order named.  
STATION FROM. WORDS. TIME AND DATE LODGED. No. 7

2. ALICE SPRINGS NA 51 11pm 17th.



Remarks.

19 NOV 1928 A.M.

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

*The time received at this Office is shown at the foot of the Form.*  
Sch. C. 337/1928—C. 18-59.—E 2028.

To LETTERGRAM

HOME TERRITORIES

CANBERRA. 19

YOUR TELEGRAM TWELFTH KILLING NATIVE BY TILMOUTH NOT REPORTED CORONER  
OWING HURRIED DEPARTURE MURRAY FOR DARWIN PROPOSE SHERIFF AS CORONER  
ACCOMPANY ME WHEN ENDEAVOURING OBTAIN STATEMENTS REQUESTED YOUR MEMORANDUM  
TWENTYEIGHT STROKE EIGHT FIVE EIGHT EIGHT OF TWENTYEIGHTH SEPTEMBER AND  
HOLD INQUEST IN LOCALITY OF KILLING. GOVERNMENT RESIDENT.

1 47pm<sup>YT</sup>

Mr. Keating

Has made extract of  
portion of telegram from Sec. P. H.  
Dept. marked, and admin. class.  
of position.

Return paper to me  
urgent.

W.D.  
19/11/28

Extract made matter will be  
dealt with on separate file.

W.D. 19/11/28



[57]

IS.

20th November, 1928.

C O N F I D E N T I A L.

My dear Willson,

I am very grateful for your letter of the 15th November in reply to mine of the 13th, and for the very thorough manner in which you have appreciated my desire. The information supplied should be particularly useful. Any further action must await decision of the Government as to the steps it will take, but, should the occasion arise to enlist your assistance further, I shall be very glad to avail myself of your kind offer.

Yours sincerely,

G.E. Willson Esq.,  
Commonwealth Public Service  
Inspector,  
Post Office Place,  
A D E L A I D E.  
S.A.

[88]

COPY. MOD.

A. 300/1.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE NATIVE RACES OF AUSTRALASIA  
AND POLYNESIA.

"Cransley",  
Thomas Street,  
GORDON.

November 13th, 1928.

The Right Honourable  
Stanley Melbourne Bruce, P.C., M.C.,  
Prime Minister of the Commonwealth.

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the above Association I desire to confirm the telegram sent to you yesterday in the joint names of the Honble. G.F. Earp, M.L.C., and Rev. W. Morley, the President and Secretary of the Association and which was as follows:-

"In view of serious revelations at trial of Aborigines for murder in Central Australia and alleged shooting of seventeen Aborigines by Police will Prime Minister permit representative of Association for Protection of Native Races being appointed a member of Commission of Enquiry. Please reply Secretary Thomas St. Gordon."

In furtherance of the above request I would like to add that the Association has since its formation in 1911 endeavoured to maintain a watchful care over the interests of the Aborigines of Australia, and of other Native Races in the South Pacific. It is in intimate relations with the Anti-Slavery & Aborigines Protection Society in London. It has also enjoyed the confidence of successive Governments of the Commonwealth, and on occasions has been permitted to see confidential papers, especially in regard to the New Hebrides and the Condominium Government.

Our Association is deeply concerned in and shocked at the events which have occurred in Central Australia, and the evidence given at the trial of the Aborigines at Darwin. It is gratified with the statements in the Daily Press that your Government will cause the fullest enquiry into the facts of the alleged Shooting of Natives, and into the causes which have led to such happenings.

Trusting that you will favourably consider the request in our telegram.

I have the honour, etc.

(SGD.) W. MORLEY,

Honorary Secretary.

# PRIME MINISTER.

WT/MOD.

A. 300/1.

Dear Sir,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th November in which it is urged that a member of your Association be appointed to any Commission that may be established to enquire into the shooting of Aborigines in Central Australia, and to inform you that your representations have been noted.

Yours faithfully,

  
Secretary.

The Reverend W. Morley,  
Honorary Secretary: Association for the  
Protection of the Native Races of  
Australasia and Polynesia,  
"Cransley",  
Thomas Street, GORDON.

*Attacks on white men  
by niggers*



PRIME MINISTER.  
WT/MOD.

The Secretary,  
Department of Home and Territories.

Referred, by direction, for favour of  
comment.

22 NOV 1928 A.M.

*P. F. Deane*

Secretary.

1 NOV 1928

GH.

28/10740.

22nd November 1928.

Reverend Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 12th November, relative to the shooting of aboriginals in Central Australia, and shall bring it under the notice of the Minister immediately he returns to Canberra.

On the receipt of advice in this Department of the incident, the Government Resident of Central Australia was instructed to make exhaustive enquiries into the matter and to furnish, under a number of heads, information which it is considered essential should be in the possession of the Minister to enable him to decide whether the shooting of the aboriginals was justified, or whether an enquiry by a specially appointed authority should be instituted into the matter.

You will be advised in due course of the action taken in the matter.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) W. J. CLEMENS

Secretary.

Rev. T. C. Rentoul,  
Methodist Inland Mission,  
MELBOURNE.

E.T.N. 2.

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

# RECEIVED TELEGRAM.

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

STATION FROM:	WORDS.	TIME AND DATE LODGED.	No. $\gamma$
1 ALICE SPRINGS SA.	38	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ 40pm 21st.	

OFFICE, DATE STAMP.



Remarks.

22 NOV 1928 A.M.

To

LETTERGRAM

HOME TERRITORIES

CANBERRA.

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

*The time received at this Office is shown at the foot of the Form. Sch. C.337/1928.—C.0686.—B.2028.*

YOURS SEVENTEENTH YOUR MEMORANDUM NINTH REGARDING SHOOTING  
 ABORIGINALS NOT RECEIVED NEXT MAIL ARRIVES HERE DECEMBER FOURTH  
 PROPOSE LEAVE FOR INVESTIGATION RECENT KILLING TWENTYEIGHTH  
 STOP DO YOU DESIRE ME AWAIT ARRIVAL YOUR MEMORANDUM NINTH.

GOVRES. 12-10a vw

*Handwritten notes:*  
 28. 1. - 3 - 2  
 6 - 20/11/28

*Handwritten notes:*  
 4/12/28  
 7-11/28  
 2-15/28

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~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ LETTERGRAM.

LETTERGRAM.

Government Resident  
ALICE SPRINGS.  
22.11.28

Yours twentyfirst desire you should await receipt this Department's memorandum ninth stop Please advise methods of investigation and itinerary you propose adopt. stop In meantime in view possibility Government deciding hold special investigation please advise by letter first post what would be involved travelling outfit etcetera to secure all evidence practicable to obtain.

*is fb*

GH.

28/10740

22nd November 1928.

Dear Madam,

In the absence of the Minister, I desire to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th November, relative to the shooting of aboriginals in Central Australia, and to inform you that immediately advice was received in this Department of the shooting of the 17 aboriginals in question steps were taken to obtain all possible details connected with the incident in order to enable the Minister to decide whether the shooting was justified or whether an enquiry by a specially appointed authority should be made into the matter.

The Department is awaiting the receipt of replies from the Government Resident to a number of enquiries addressed to that officer. When these come to hand the whole of the papers connected with the incident will be put before the Minister for consideration of the action which should be taken in the matter.

The observations made by your Association have been duly recorded, and will be brought to the Minister's notice immediately he returns to Canberra.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) W. J. CLEMPINE

Secretary.

Miss Blanche Stephens,  
Hon. Sec. Women's Non-Party  
Association of South Australia,  
Marvard Chambers,  
198 North Terrace,  
ADELAIDE.



1951

# Australian Women's National League

PRESIDENT:  
MRS. CLAUDE COUCHMAN

BANK OF NEW ZEALAND CHAMBERS,  
1st FLOOR,  
349 COLLINS STREET

HON. SECRETARY:  
~~MRS. LYON T. DE~~  
*Mrs. M. A. Bolitho*  
GENERAL ORGANISING SECRETARY:  
MRS. C. E. BOLITHO

*Melbourne,*

21st. November 1928

Hon. Sir N.R.Howse, V.C., K.C.B., K.C.M.G.  
Minister for Home and Territories and Health.  
35 Kensington Rd,  
SOUTH YARRA.

Dear Sir,

At the meeting of the Australian Women's National League Executive held on Monday 19th instant, it was unanimously agreed that a letter be written you expressing satisfaction at the proposed action of the Commonwealth Government in regard to the recent killing of Australian Aborigines.

Members earnestly hope that this enquiry will be immediate and thorough.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

*C. E. Bolitho*

Gen. Org. Secretary.

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Commonwealth Offices, Melbourne.  
23rd November, 1928.

Dear Mrs. Bolitho,

I am in receipt of your letter dated 21st inst. relative to the killing of aboriginals in the Central Australia, and can assure you that the fullest inquiry is being made.

Yours faithfully,

*(Sgd) W. H. H. H. H.*

Mrs. G.E. Bolitho,  
General Organizing Secretary,  
Australian Women's National League,  
349 Collins St.,  
Melbourne.

ET. No. 2.

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

OFFICE DATE STAMP.

# RECEIVED TELEGRAM.

The first line of this Telegram contains the following particulars in the order named.  
STATION FROM. WORDS. TIME AND DATE LODGED. No.

1. ALICE SPRINGS 23 9-am. 24th.

Remarks.

26 NOV 1928 A.M.

To HOMETER,  
CANBERRA.



*This message has been received subject to the Post and Telegraph Act and Regulations.*  
*The time received at this Office is shown at the foot of the Form.*  
Sch. C.337/1928.—C.9630.—B.5028.

YOURS TWENTYSECOND CAN YOU PLEASE ADVISE PROBABLE NUMBER  
COMPRISING INVESTIGATING PARTY IF DECIDED ON ENABLE ESTIMATE OF COST  
BE PREPARED.

*you 12x 3d 00  
Co 2x*

GOVRES.  
12-35pmYT.

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GOVRES

ALICE SPRINGS

YOURS TWENTYFOURTH INVESTIGATING PARTY IF DECIDED UPON WOULD PROBABLY  
COMPRISE ONE POSSIBLY TWO MEMBERS STOP PLEASE FURNISH DESIRED INFORMATION  
AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE

HOMETER. 26.11.1928

*922*

*to JG*

*Sam JG*

JU/NP. Copy

[99]

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE NATIVE RACES OF  
AUSTRALASIA AND POLYNESIA.

"Cransley",  
Thomas Street,  
GORDON.

November 15th 1928.

A.300/1.

The Rt. Hon. S. M. Bruce, C.H., P.C., M.C.

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the above Association I am writing  
this to confirm the telegram forwarded to you yesterday  
November 14th which was as follows :-

"At meeting of Executive of the Association  
for Protection of Native Races resolved to  
telegraph to Prime Minister urging necessity  
for immediate enquiry by a competent official  
or tribunal into the recent shootings of  
natives by Commonwealth Police in Central  
Australia which has deeply shocked the  
community. The Association would further  
point out that the Leader of the Opposition  
in his Policy Speech promised adequate treat-  
ment of the Aborigines on Federal basis on lines  
advocated by the Association. It expresses  
the hope that the Prime Minister will immediately  
make a public declaration of the Government's  
policy and intentions in this important matter."

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

(SCD) W.MORLEY.

Mon. Secretary.

[100]

JU/MP. Copy

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE NATIVE RACES  
OF AUSTRALASIA AND POLYNESIA.

"Cransley",  
Thomas Street,  
Gordon.

November 15th, 1928.

The Rt. Hon. Stanley M. Bruce, C.H., P.C., M.C.,  
Prime Minister of the Commonwealth.

Dear Sir,

On behalf of the above Association  
I am writing to confirm a telegram forwarded to you  
yesterday November 14th in reference to the Lazarette  
at Darwin, and which was as follows :-

"That this Association learns with  
surprise and horror of the continued  
disgraceful conditions obtaining in  
the Lazarette at Darwin and regrets  
that though these conditions have been  
pointed out to the Department of Home  
and Territories nothing up to the present  
has been done to relieve the position of  
these unfortunate Aborigines."

I am, Sir,

Faithfully yours,

(SGD) W. MORLEY.

Hon. Secretary.

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JU/NE. Copy

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE NATIVE RACES OF  
AUSTRALASIA AND POLYNESIA.

"Cransley",  
Thomas Street,  
Gordon.

November 15th, 1928.

The Rt. Hon. S. M. Bruce, G.H., P.C., M.C.,  
Prime Minister of the Commonwealth.

Dear Sir,

On behalf of our Association I have the honour to thank you. Your telegram received at 1.30 p.m. today in reply to our telegram of November 12th re the shooting of Aborigines in Central Australia and the trial recently held at Darwin, and for the promise your telegram conveys "of full enquiry by Home and Territories Department, if determined that circumstances warrant special investigation request of Association will be taken into consideration in determining personnel of investigating authority."

I am,  
dear Sir,

Faithfully yours,

(SGD) W. MORLEY.

Hon. Secretary.

5021

# PRIME MINISTER.

~~JG/HP.~~

A.300/1.

Dear Sir,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your communications of the 15th November, confirming telegrams exchanged with your Association on the subject of the treatment meted out to aborigines in Central Australia.

Yours faithfully,

  
Secretary.

The Rev. W. Morley,  
"Cransley",  
Thomas Street,  
GORDON.N.S.W.



*Attack on White men  
Ca.*

[103]



PRIME MINISTER.

JU/HP.

A.300/1.

The Secretary,  
Department of Home and Territories.

Referred, by direction, for information.

26 NOV 1928 A.M.

*P. E. Deane*  
Secretary.

A. W. H. U. 100

Church Office 28/10/40  
Ebley Street  
Waverley, N.S.W.  
November 22, 1928.

[104]

The Secretary for Home and Territories.  
Canberra.

Sir.

The Headquarters Council of the Australian Aborigines Mission has heard with alarm and indignation the report of the alleged shooting in Central Australia of 17 Aborigines, including two women. We are quite aware of the necessity for severely punishing the natives when they are convicted of crime, but the killing of such a large number in attempting to arrest the offenders, seems to us to reveal a condition of things that calls for urgent enquiry.

We respectfully urge that a full and exhaustive enquiry be made into all the facts relating to this regrettable happening, and that the necessary action be taken to ensure protection of the natives.

Yours faithfully,

*E. J. Lefter.*

President of Australian Aborigines Mission.

26 NOV 1928 A.M.

Mr Secretary

I noticed in this morning's Canberra Times that the Govt had decided to appoint an independent inquiry.

If this is correct, the letter to Jim Telfer will require to be altered.

JHC  
28/11/82

~~to the~~ Yes, ~~hold for a day~~ acknowledge and inform that Report being taken which will ensure that the matter will be thoroughly investigated

WJH  
28/11/82

~~XXXXXX~~

IS.

28/10740

[106]

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
CANBERRA. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ 29th November, 1928.

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 22nd November, relative to the shooting of aboriginals in Central Australia, and desire to inform you that steps are being taken which will ensure that the matter will be thoroughly investigated.

Yours faithfully,

*M. J. C.*

Secretary.

E. J. Telfer Esq.,  
President of Australian  
Aborigines' Mission,  
Church Office,  
Ebley Street,  
WAVERLEY.  
N. S. W.

- (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.

*JAC*  
 19.11.29

Comments received to date from the Government Resident.

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

- (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 <sup>opinion</sup> 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tilmouth's case.

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

Number of aboriginals shot and killed.

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

	<u>Killed.</u>	<u>Shot, not known whether killed.</u>
Brookes' case,	17 (including 2 lubras).	
Morton's case,	2 and a number of others.	1 and a number of others.
Tilmouth's case	1	
<hr/>		
<u>Total</u>	20 and a number of others.	1 and a number of others..
<hr/>		

Action taken by this Department to date (19/11/28).

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

/The Government



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

6 aboriginal males killed.

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

2 aboriginals killed.

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

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

3 aboriginals killed.

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

Total killed,  
17 including  
two lubras.

Morton's case.

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

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

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

1 one aboriginal killed.

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

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

A number of aboriginals shot.

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

2 aboriginals killed.

Number of

Tilmouth.

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

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

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

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

Brookes' case.

*Killing of Aborigines by Police and others.*

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

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

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

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

1 aboriginal killed.

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

On the 16/8/1928, the party proceeded to the locality where the murderers were supposed to be. On nearing the camp a guard was placed on the outskirts to prevent any aboriginals from escaping. Murray, with one tracker, entered the camp. The aboriginals immediately assembled in some low scrub. Murray dismounted to discern 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 lurras. A quantity of property belonging to Brookes was recovered from this camp.

5 aboriginals killed.

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

/hostilities.

MEMORANDUM:-

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

Attacks by aboriginals on white men.

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

Brookes.

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

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

The aboriginals buried Brookes' body in a rabbit burrow.

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

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

Morton.

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

- (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.

*[Handwritten signature]*  
19.11.28

Comments received to date from the Government Resident.

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

- (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 <sup>opinion</sup> case of old residents, trouble has been brewing for some time, and the safety of the white man could only be assured by drastic action on the part of the authorities.
- (j) The result of the recent action by the police will have the right effect upon the aboriginals, and while regretting the necessity for extreme measures, the fact remains that the aboriginals brought the trouble on themselves.

/(k)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Total No and a number of others killed.  
One and a number of others shot (Killed?).

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

Tilmouth's case.

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

Number of aboriginals shot and killed.

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

	<u>Killed.</u>	<u>Shot, not known whether killed.</u>
Brookes' case,	17 (including 2 lubras).	
Morton's case,	2 and a number of others.	1 and a number of others.
Tilmouth's case	1	
<hr/>		
<u>Total</u>	20 and a number of others.	1 and a number of others..
<hr/>		

Action taken by this Department to date (19/11/28).

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

/The Government

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

6 aboriginals killed.

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

2 aboriginals killed.

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

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

3 aboriginals killed.

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

Total killed,  
17 including  
two lubras.

Morton's case.

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

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

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

7 one aboriginal killed.

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

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

A number of aboriginals shot.

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

2 aboriginals killed.

A number of aboriginals killed.



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Tilmouth.

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

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

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

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

Brookes' case.

*Killing of aboriginal by Police and others.*

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

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

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

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

1 aboriginal killed.

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

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

5 aboriginals killed.

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

/hostilities.

MEMORANDUM:-

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

Attacks by aboriginals on white men.

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

Brookes.

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

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

The aboriginals buried Brookes' body in a rabbit burrow.

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

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

Morton.

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*MS*

19.11.28