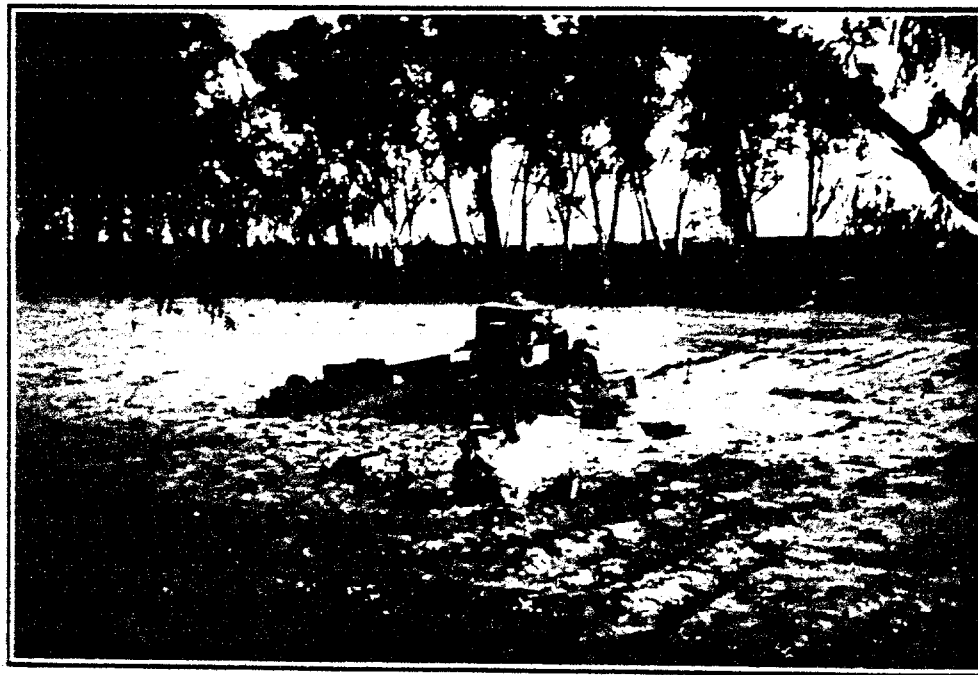


P42



Coniston Station .



A break-down, near Coniston.

*Facing Page 94*

*From F. E. Baume, Tragedy Track, 1933*

THE CONISTON KILLINGS.

M. C. HARTWIG.

Thesis presented as  
part requirement for the  
Honours Degree of Bachelor of Arts  
in  
The University of Adelaide  
1960.

De mortuis pro posteris.

For I was my father's son, tender and only beloved  
in the sight of my mother.

Proverbs 4 : 3.

PREFACE.

The subject of this thesis is still a live issue. If I offend people by what I have written it is because of my own inadequacy or because of the standards by which I measure events. I do not pretend to possess full information on the subject and it would have helped me greatly if I had visited the area of the killings.

I should like to record my thanks to Mr. W. G. Murray and Mr. R. B. Stafford for the interviews they gave me; to Mr. and Mrs. W. Heffernan, Mr. and Mrs. J. Hamlyn and all the other Centralian residents who corresponded with me; to Mr. A. C. Barclay and Mr. I. McLean; to Mr. T. G. H. Strehlow, Rev. F. W. Albrecht and Mr. C. P. Mountford for supplying native accounts of the killings; and especially to the last named for all his valuable suggestions.

June, 1960.

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PROLOGUE.

"The historian today is in danger of forgetting that his 'primary responsibility' is 'the relation of his subject to the wider affairs of contemporary life', and that, although his 'immediate business' may be to lead his audience 'into the past' he 'cannot, and does not, and should not, escape from presenting to them, the citizens of the future, an outlook upon the present'."

The scope of this thesis is, in a sense, narrow. It is directly concerned only with a few months in time, a few thousand square miles in space and a few hundred human beings. It tells of the last serious clash in Australia between the aboriginal inhabitants and the encroaching white settlers, of the last punitive expedition; of the conditions that led to this clash; and of its repercussions: a narrative packed with drama and the stuff of a successful film or novel.

However, in another sense the scope is very broad. I write with a view to making, perhaps, further investigations into the history of Central Australia and touch on themes not wholly relevant to the topic of this thesis; and I write with a 'vision' - for Central Australia, Australia and the world.

Historians (to put it crudely) write of the past, strive though they may to avoid it, in a way to suit themselves and, if the sum of their attitudes be taken, in a way to suit the age and civilization in which they live. Willy nilly, history is perverted.

And every historian is a creator even if it be in spite of himself - and Aristotle<sup>(2)</sup>. His ideas about the past influence the future. For that very reason I believe that he should deliberately seek to use the past to extend his will into the future, to influence the direction of society. And to give this

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extension purpose he must acquire a 'vision' of and for the future and orientate his thinking to it. The wisdom of an idea about the past then becomes for him an historical criterion and his attempts to change the world become more vigorous than his attempts to understand the past; for he possesses an instrument that he knows he can wield, while accepting his task with humility, mightily for good.

That part of my 'vision' which is relevant to this thesis is of a world where, the great age of colonization over, all races live peaceably together; of an Australia where black and white are happily assimilated, where the right of ingress and egress is denied to no-one, where resources are developed to the full by a powerful State, where surplus wealth is given to those who need it and where cultures meet and interact to their mutual benefit; and of a Central Australia as an area of economic wealth and a mainspring of Australian cultural activity. This is perhaps an unattainable ideal; but it exists already in the imagination and is worth striving for. Of course, not all historians share my 'vision'. Until Western society, like the Communist world, dedicates itself to a common goal, the 'visions' of its intellectuals must remain individual. Western historians need nothing so much as a great prophet on the direction of society whose lead they may follow: a Marx or a Frederick Jackson Turner on a grander scale. Every historian, I believe, should try to become that prophet, until he comes or until a common 'vision' is worked out.

This is written to indicate my methods; to leave me



untrammelled and without obligation to support my pre-suppositions in the pages that follow; to heighten by contrast what I have to say - for I deliberately measure events against my 'vision' and do not hesitate to try to present them in such a way that what was undesirable in them may not happen again and what was revealed by them as desirable may be heeded in the future<sup>(3)</sup>; and to show what it is that makes a thesis - a synthesis - of this work, in my mind at least.

What I have written is but a poor effort to use the historical instrument as I conceive it: it is difficult to hold it steadily when operating upon the lower portion of a country that moulded a philosophy like Xavier Herbert's.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have thought it more profitable to record in detail the immediate aspects and repercussions of the punitive expeditions of 1928 than to dwell at great length upon their distant reverberations: both because it suits my purpose and because historians have consistently refused to undertake such a task, presumably because they have not considered it worthwhile to go into gory details. All history has a purpose if given one.

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REFERENCES.

1. G. Barraclough, History in a Changing World, Oxford, 1955, p.29 (quoting N. Sykes and W. K. Hancock).
2. See Poetics 9, 1 - 7.
3. Where desirable it is part of my method to use, for example, even the language of the Centralians.

Chapter 1

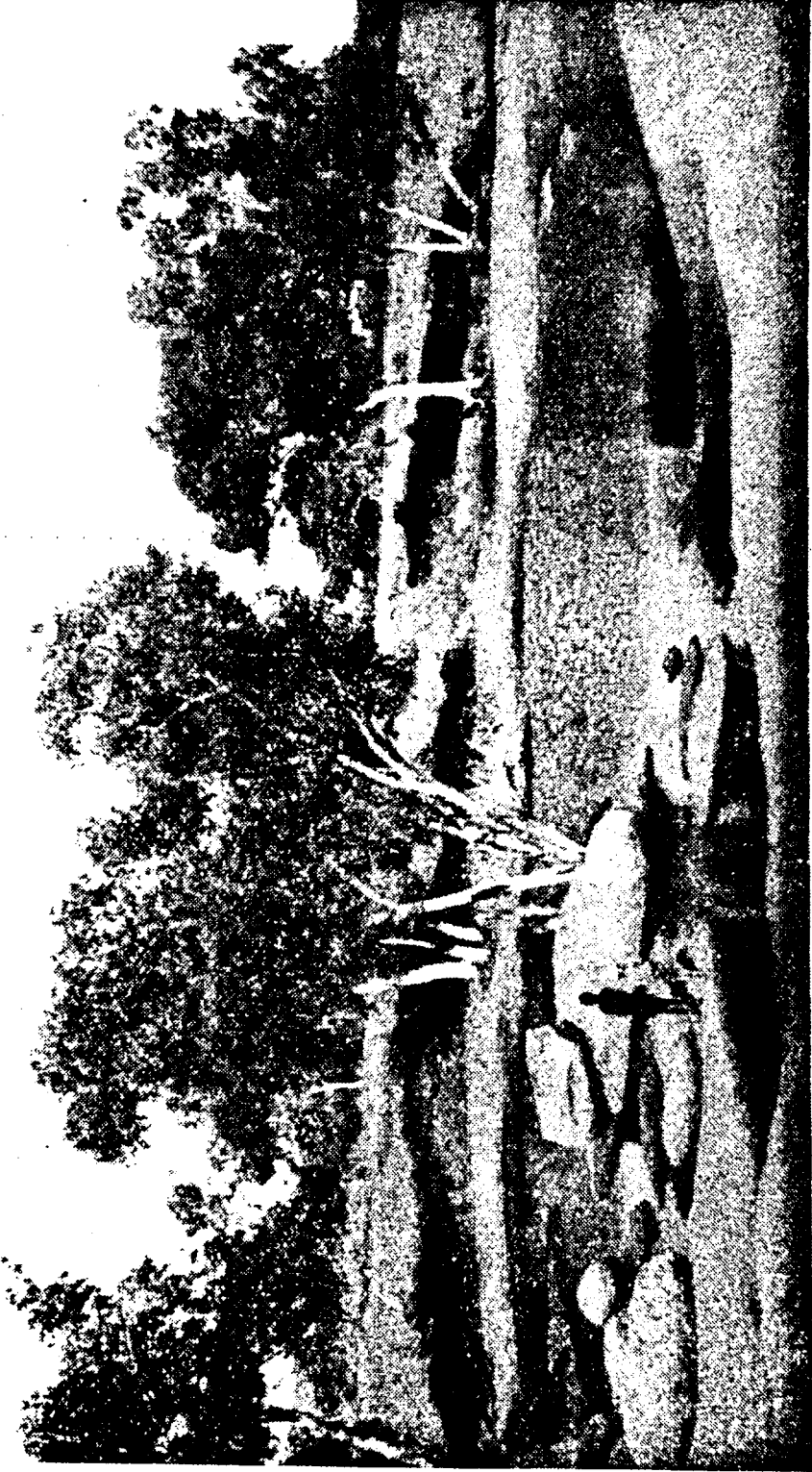
STAMPING GROUND.<sup>(1)</sup>

"Mr. Frederick Brooks, a prospector, was murdered by blacks early in August of last year at a lonely spot 80 miles north of Alice Springs and later an attack was made by blacks on a station owner, Mr. William Morton. Mr. Brooks was assailed with spears, tomahawks and boomerangs. Police went in pursuit and in a series of violent encounters 31 blacks were killed."

This resumé of a strange story from the Australian sunlight was published in the London Times of 31/1/1929 for those of its readers who had lost its thread in the London fog. Though slightly sensational it adequately, except for one gross error, sums up the principal action of the narrative set down in the following pages, the hub about which discussion turns.

The incidents referred to by the "Times" took place not eighty miles north of Alice Springs, but one hundred and sixty miles north-west and further: the "Times" correspondent in Adelaide had apparently not yet adjusted his sense of distance to Australian conditions. The north-west part of Central Australia, then, is my chief stamping ground, and a brief glance at the geography, climate and history of this little known <sup>and</sup> area/of Central Australia, as far as it is relevant and up to August 1928, when Brooks was murdered, will greatly assist the understanding of the tragic incidents of late 1928.

The Lander River is the dominant geographical feature of the north-west country. Its headquarters, discovered by Gosse in 1873, are in the Reynolds Ranges<sup>(2)</sup>. It sweeps its sandy bed and bedding of gums around in a broad arc right



From Madigan, C.T.,  
Central Australia,  
Melbourne, 1946  
(frontispiece)

Split-Rock Waterhole, Lander River.

plate I

through<sup>(3)</sup> the semi-desert country of the Walpari<sup>(4)</sup> tribe. However, it flows only when the monsoons visit Central Australia, the tail end of which eases itself fairly regularly from 13" at Barrow Creek to 5" at the South Australian border<sup>(5)</sup>. The ranges of Coniston Station catch more than 12", but west and north-west the rainfall gradually decreases: one enters the enormous, red, anonymous peneplain of the Lander, an area not inaptly described by Douglas Lockwood as 'Zero Land',<sup>(6)</sup> where the mulga gives way to hardier vegetation and where surface water, if existent, is in small rock-holes and crevasses mostly known only to the aborigines in 1928;<sup>(7)</sup> where granitic outcrops, like ancient skeletons crumbled and worn, their red flesh flush at their feet, alone break the monotony of its silver-grey surface<sup>(8)</sup>.

Here many years ago the Walpari had come to make their home<sup>(9)</sup>. It was a hard environment to come to terms with, but they managed to do so. This is perhaps their greatest achievement and one which the white man is slow to acknowledge. It will be many years before white people come to terms with this no-man's land on like measure. To adapt themselves to it the aborigines were forced to develop a highly complex social organization and skill themselves in the art of food gathering<sup>(10)</sup>. Until the coming of the white man they were fine physical specimens, scarcely contaminated by disease and knowing little hunger: though by white man's standards they were perennially hungry, they had so conditioned themselves to it that this was not hunger to be hungry<sup>(11)</sup>. They were extremely mobile for an aboriginal tribe, being part of the great Pitjanda-speaking block whose territories extend right across the Great Victorian Desert to Tanami in the north and the Canning Stock Route in the west<sup>(12)</sup>. Whenever hard times came they could move up or in towards the Lander to

better country. Thus they lived for centuries, knowing no contact with any civilization radically different from their own. Having little gauge of time and space, living in an eternal dreamtime and bound together as a tribe but loosely from the family units up, they were poorly equipped to meet the white man when he came<sup>(13)</sup>.

The white man came to Central Australia first in 1862. J. M. Stuart passed close by the Walpari country, planting a flag on top of Central Mount Sturt (Stuart) and a pious hope that the dawn of civilization and christianity was about to break upon the aborigines<sup>(14)</sup>. Within a dozen years a creek at the foot of the noble mount was littered with bones of the objects of his hopes indiscriminately massacred by a punitive expedition<sup>(15)</sup>. South Australia annexed the whole of the Northern Territory in the year after Stuart's journey and by 1866 a mob of her cattle were being depastured over the border in Central Australia<sup>(16)</sup>. By 1872 the Overland Telegraph Line was completed and telegraph stations, including Barrow Creek, which figures in this history, <sup>were</sup> established at intervals along it<sup>(17)</sup>.

Settlement moved in spear-head formation along the Overland Telegraph Line, the first cattle station in the MacDonnell Ranges, Undoelya, being formed in 1872<sup>(18)</sup>. Only after World War I did settlement spread to any great extent west of Barrow Creek and Ti-tree Well, though some leases were granted before and during the war. Napperby was taken up in 1903 or 1904 and stocked probably only in 1915 by H. E. Tilmouth and J. H. Turner<sup>(19)</sup>. Coniston lease further north was granted in 1917 and stocked three or four years later by Randall Stafford<sup>(20)</sup>. It is not known when W. Morton stocked the 650 square miles he once held one hundred miles further

down the Lander, but it was stocked in 1928 and appears on a map dated 31/3/1925<sup>(21)</sup>. It was known, to its owner at least, as Broadmeadows, and was the furthest white settlement down the life line of the Walpari, the Lander<sup>(22)</sup>. Further east Mount Peake was stocked by J. Wyckham and Matthews between 1925 and 1927; W. Morton depastured cattle in the Anningie country and was granted a lease of 124 square miles there on 17/1/1927; Ti-tree station was formed in 1919 by W. Heffernan and Pine Hill by T. Moar circa 1916. Coniston remained the western outpost of settlement until 1932 when Mount Doreen was stocked, though Cockatoo Creek lease, now Mount Doreen, was granted 15/7/1927 and an unsuccessful attempt to stock it made<sup>(23)</sup>.

The reason for the comparative slowness of settlement west of Barrow Creek and Ti-tree Well - by 1928 the settlers there comprised only a handful of Central Australia's three hundred and fifty<sup>(24)</sup> white people - was apparently the poverty of some of the country, the great distances from supplies and markets and the reputation of the blacks of that area for cheekiness.<sup>(25)</sup> Coniston homestead is in Anmatjera country. To the north-east is the country of the Kaititj tribe who had attacked Barrow Creek Telegraph Station in 1874 and Annas Reservoir homestead in the same decade; to the south-west the Gnalia tribe and to the north-west the Walpari who had murdered Stewart near the Granites in 1910<sup>(26)</sup>. When Stafford stocked Coniston after the war he was told that it was foolish and dangerous to go to that area<sup>(27)</sup>. The homestead he built looked like a fort<sup>(28)</sup>.

But the settlers were not greatly perturbed. They were hardy, independent men with an immediate motive for gain. When drought came, as it did in 1927, they stuck it out,

cushioning their minds on the thought that they were helping to build the British Empire or were pioneering Australia for the Australians<sup>(29)</sup>. They were 'small' men, starting with little capital but with a lot of land based on liberal terms and a forty-two year security of tenure: for by 1928 most of those who previously held land under grazing licences had converted them to leases<sup>(30)</sup>. Even in normal times their life was not easy. Supplies took from two to three months to get through over rutted tracks that dodged in and out among the mulga, and the homesteads, where they existed at all, were of the roughest order<sup>(31)</sup>.

None of the men I have mentioned were married. This alone predicates an aberration from the norm of white society. The getting of piebald ponies<sup>(32)</sup>, next to the raising of cattle, goats, sheep and horses, and mining, was the third biggest industry of Central Australia. It had been given a big fillip by the influx of miners to the Arltunga and Winnecke Depot gold-fields in the first decade of the present century.<sup>(33)</sup> By 1929 there were more than three half-castes in Central Australia for every six whites, and in 1930 at least one third of them were children under twelve years of age<sup>(34)</sup>. Comboism was practised openly, being condoned by officialdom, in spite of the severe laws against it<sup>(35)</sup>.

All the station owners used aborigines to help them with their work, giving them in return 5/- a week and clothing and tucker, if permanently employed<sup>(36)</sup>. If not, they received clothing and tucker only, which was usually the case in the Coniston area<sup>(37)</sup>. Stafford employed Anmatjera aborigines. Morton was probably the only man employing any of the Walpari in 1928. The settlers enforced a strict segregation between all but black velvet and black labourers and themselves, a





*Alice Springs in 1929.*

*From Madigan, C.T., Central Australia,  
Melbourne, 1944,  
facing p. 71*

segregation which is still practised today. It was believed that the aborigine should be 'kept in his place'. Even the dogs of the whites lorded it over the mongrels of the camps.<sup>(38)</sup>

Barrow Creek Telegraph Station, Ti-tree Well and Ryan's Well were the nearest means of communication they had with the outside world. At these places they could send messages over the telegraph line. None of these settlers, so far as it is known, possessed a motor car in 1928, though motor transport was speeding up communication generally<sup>(39)</sup>; and there were no decent roads. Cattle were usually droved more than four hundred miles down to the railhead at Oodnadatta. From time to time a race meet at Barrow Creek or Alice Springs might be attended<sup>(40)</sup>. The only church services were held in the Australian Inland Mission Hostel, built in 1924, the sermon being delivered by a passing preacher<sup>(41)</sup>. And the hostel was the only place at which they could obtain medical aid of any kind: people with serious illnesses had to undertake the arduous journey to Adelaide by camel or horse and by train: the more serious cases had to stay in the Centre and die<sup>(42)</sup>.

In these conditions the Warden concept of mateship flourished. The word 'mate' was bandied about freely: even the aborigines should be mates - to one another<sup>(43)</sup>. Each settler of the Coniston country in 1928 had his mate: Stafford and Brooks; Morton and Sandford; Wyckham and Matthews; Turner and Tilmouth .....<sup>(44)</sup>

Conditions - among them the smallness of the community - produced also a wider 'mateship', a strong sense of settler solidarity over against the aborigines and 'the South'<sup>(45)</sup>. The settlers were resentful of armchair criticisms by people in the South, especially when they were made in connexion with the aborigines<sup>(46)</sup>. Their opinion that the aborigine

should be 'kept in his place', was in direct contrast with the doctrines being preached by men like Basedow and Spencer that the aborigine was the white man's brother, of Caucasian stock, his next of kin<sup>(47)</sup>.

The Centralians ran the country, within their limited capacities, pretty much as they wanted to. They depastured their herds on unleased country, prospected and mined in aboriginal reserves and employed aborigines as they wished.<sup>(48)</sup> They were independent, not so much because they did not want help or supervision, but because Governmental Control was pitifully weak.

The Administration, in spite of the Northern Australia Act of 1926, was a shambles. This Act, gazetted on 1/1/1927, was hailed as a sign that at last the Federal authorities were turning their attention inland<sup>(49)</sup>. But even developmentally this was true only to a small degree. The Act set up an expensive North Australia Commission of three and vested it with the powers of the Land Board of the Northern Territory in the newly created Territories of Central and North Australia. This was the only power it had in Central Australia where D. Campbell, Stock Inspector and Coroner, was its lone representative<sup>(50)</sup>.

Naturally enough, Central Australia was neglected, as it had been in the past. Little of the revenue from lands was spent on developmental projects there and in 1928 not a penny of public moneys had been spent on boring for water along the stock routes, the one great need of the country<sup>(51)</sup>. It is true that the railway from Oodnadatta to Alice Springs was begun in 1928, but that was due neither to the new Act nor to the efforts of the Commission.

Central Australia was placed directly under the control of the Department of Home and Territories 1,500 miles away in Melbourne (later in 1927 in Canberra) and J. C. Cawood was appointed Government Resident, the representative of the Federal Government in Alice Springs. He was asked to report and advise on the developmental prospects of Central Australia, which he seldom did<sup>(52)</sup>, and was shackled by his responsibility to the Minister for Home and Territories<sup>(53)</sup> C. W. C. Marr, then Sir Neville Howse, then C. L. A. Abbott in the period under review. It took eight days and often more to communicate with them by post. His Advisory Council of two elected and two nominated members was impotent. Government was primarily by Ordinances which were usually drawn up in Canberra and posted in the 'Northern Territory Times and Gazette' published far away in Darwin. Settlers complained about this method of direct rule; but in many instances, direct though it was, it did not reach them.

The Act had no provisions at all concerning the aborigines and the Federal Government had no definite or constructive policy towards them: even the 1918 Ordinance concerning aborigines and subsequent amendments to it, such as it was, was not properly enforced, settler solidarity reaching even unto officialdom. In introducing the Bill for the Act to Parliament Bruce called the development of the Northern Territory Australia's greatest task and expressed hopes that Central Australia would one day become a State<sup>(54)</sup>. Apparently even hopes cast a shadow, for they seem to have obscured the aboriginal problem.

The police were still Protectors of Aborigines besides being engaged in a number of other tasks. They constituted almost the entire public service and also the smallest police force in the world<sup>(55)</sup>. There were only seven policemen in Central Australia in 1928, including the Commissioner of Police who was also Government Resident, and only five police stations, two of which, those at Barrow Creek and Arltunga, had been built as recently as 1925. The Sergeant of Police was also Chief Protector of Aborigines, Chief Mining Warden, Clerk of the Court and Keeper of the Gaol<sup>(56)</sup>. The police received no training in the treatment of aborigines even though their chief industry was arresting cattle killers. To trace the offenders they used black trackers who were supplied with arms under s.35 of Aboriginal Ordinance No. 9 of 1918 and sometimes went alone after their man although there were no laws <sup>regulating</sup> ~~requesting~~ this<sup>(57)</sup>. In 1927 they were bereft of the benevolent leadership of Sergeant Stott, one time autocrat of Central Australia, who, finding it impossible to work under the new Administration, took his final leave in April<sup>(58)</sup>.

Capital offenders were tried before the Supreme Court at Darwin: only late in 1928 was provision made for it to sit in Central Australia<sup>(59)</sup>, by which time it was possible to set up a jury list there, and only in 1929 did Central Australia get its 'own' court by an Ordinance<sup>(60)</sup> which made it one and the same, and interchangeable, with the court in Darwin. Other offenders, mostly native, were charged before a Special (that is, untrained) Magistrate, Mr. E. Allchurch, also manager of the Alice Springs Telegraph Station: as no Criminal Sittings were held in Alice Springs and as

it was impracticable to take offenders to Darwin, all charges had to be reduced to 'being in unlawful possession', the penalties consequently rarely exceeding nine months imprisonment<sup>(61)</sup>. Allchurch never decided, before his death in 1929, whether he was administering the South Australian Criminal Law or the Centralian. Aboriginal offenders were prosecuted by their Protectors and consigned to the Alice Springs gaol and neck chains in charge of an 'Old Timer'<sup>(62)</sup>. Some of them liked 'civilisation' so much that they became police trackers on being released<sup>(63)</sup>.

In 1928 there were representatives of three different missionary institutions in Central Australia: Hermannsburg Mission Station on the Finke, Mr. E. E. Kramer, an itinerant missionary of the Aborigines' Friends' Association, and Miss A. Lock<sup>(64)</sup> of the Australian Aborigines' Society, at Harding Soak on the Woodforde east of the Coniston country. They added materially to the Government's poor effort by supplying three of the eleven ration depots in the Centre<sup>(65)</sup>.

With affairs in such a state it is little wonder that when the worst<sup>(66)</sup> drought in Central Australia's history set in in 1927, there was trouble between the settlers and the aborigines. There was little to prevent it. Cawood had heard complaints of cattle killing by the blacks ever since he had assumed office. All he had done was to ask for more police<sup>(66a)</sup> which he did not get until it was too late. Official reports before the tragedy - and, indeed, after it - while admitting that there was an 'unprecedented' drought, denied that the bush natives were hungry or starving<sup>(67)</sup>. The southern Press and public opinion at first had little to say on the matter: their attention was



Native Children at Mt. Doreen.

Note the Landscape

From C.T. Madigan, Australia,  
Central Melbourne, 1944  
facing Plate 4

absorbed by 'The Half-Caste Problem'. But revelations after the Coniston killings leave no doubt at all that many bush natives, and even some of those within the pale of civilization, were unusually hungry, if not actually starving, and often thirsty<sup>(68)</sup>.

North-west of Coniston the great peneplain had been baked dry and partly denuded of game by the drought. The rabbits had entirely disappeared. What was more important, water became scarce even for the myall who knew its secret hiding places. The aborigine is everywhere naturally attracted to civilization for what he can get out of it and practises an 'intelligent parasitism' which is detested by the hard working, resourceful settler. The drought was an added motive for him to come into the fringes of settlement. And he came in 1928. In that year there were rumours, which had begun already in 1925 or 1926, among Stafford's working boys, that the people from the west were going to come in and oust the white man from the country<sup>(69)</sup>. It cannot be established that there was a concerted scheme among the Walpari to effect this. The myalls came in to the Lander chiefly for food and water.

And the settler went to meet them: Morton had not occupied Broadmeadows for very many years in 1928; Wyckham had brought cattle over from Mt. Peake to better pastures on the Lander; and Turner and Tilmouth had come to Stafford and asked him where they could find feed for their hungry herds. He directed them to White Stone, a water sixty miles down the Lander, and Tilmouth had taken 1500 bullocks there from their overstocked holding at Napperby<sup>(70)</sup>. Thus in 1928 cattle were grazing along all the good country of the Lander. The white settlers had to expand or watch their cattle, the



careful gain of many years, die. And they could get only very poor prices for those cattle they did manage to fatten.

Their movements must have affected the Walpari, not only by encroaching on their game and water down the Lander, but also by contributing to the undermining of the social structure of the tribe. Nor were theirs the only movements. A. Davidson had moved across the Lander plain in 1900 ~~from the south-east~~ to Tanami where he discovered gold; Joe Brown, Morton, Wyckham, O'Neill, Thomson and others had since gone up the Lander to Morton's main camp and then struck across to the goldfields; unsuccessful attempts had been made to take cattle across to the Fitzroy River, but in 1926 two mobs of horses got across. In 1921 Joe Brown discovered a lake at the end of the Lander. It is now called Lake Surprise at the suggestion of Sergeant Noblet who made a trip up to it in 1922. Ben Nicker went across to Tanami in 1926. In 1911 the Granites goldfields had been discovered and abandoned because Stewart (sometimes spelt Stuart) the discoverer, was killed by blacks. The fields were rediscovered in 1925 and a number of parties went out there in 1926. This rediscovery may have been identical with the legendary 'Wyckham's Find' in 1925 for which Joe Brown searched until his death in 1928, major-mitchelling until he had eliminated almost every place where it could be. The Kangaroo Prospecting Party, consisting of D. MacDowall, A. Thomson and J. Young, went out after it early in 1928. Rabbit Flat Well was built at the Granites in 1927 and in July 1928 Michael Terry's expedition was in the Walpari country, the first to bust the rut across the Lander plain for motor cars. He found, at No. 1 Granite, drawings of stock brands by the aborigines<sup>(71)</sup>.

It is evident, then, that disturbing influences had

been among the Walpari for some time and that they were not all uncontacted myalls. It is reasonable to deduce that by 1928 all had heard of the white man; that many had had dealings with him; and that this had produced a psychological bewilderment among the members of the tribe.

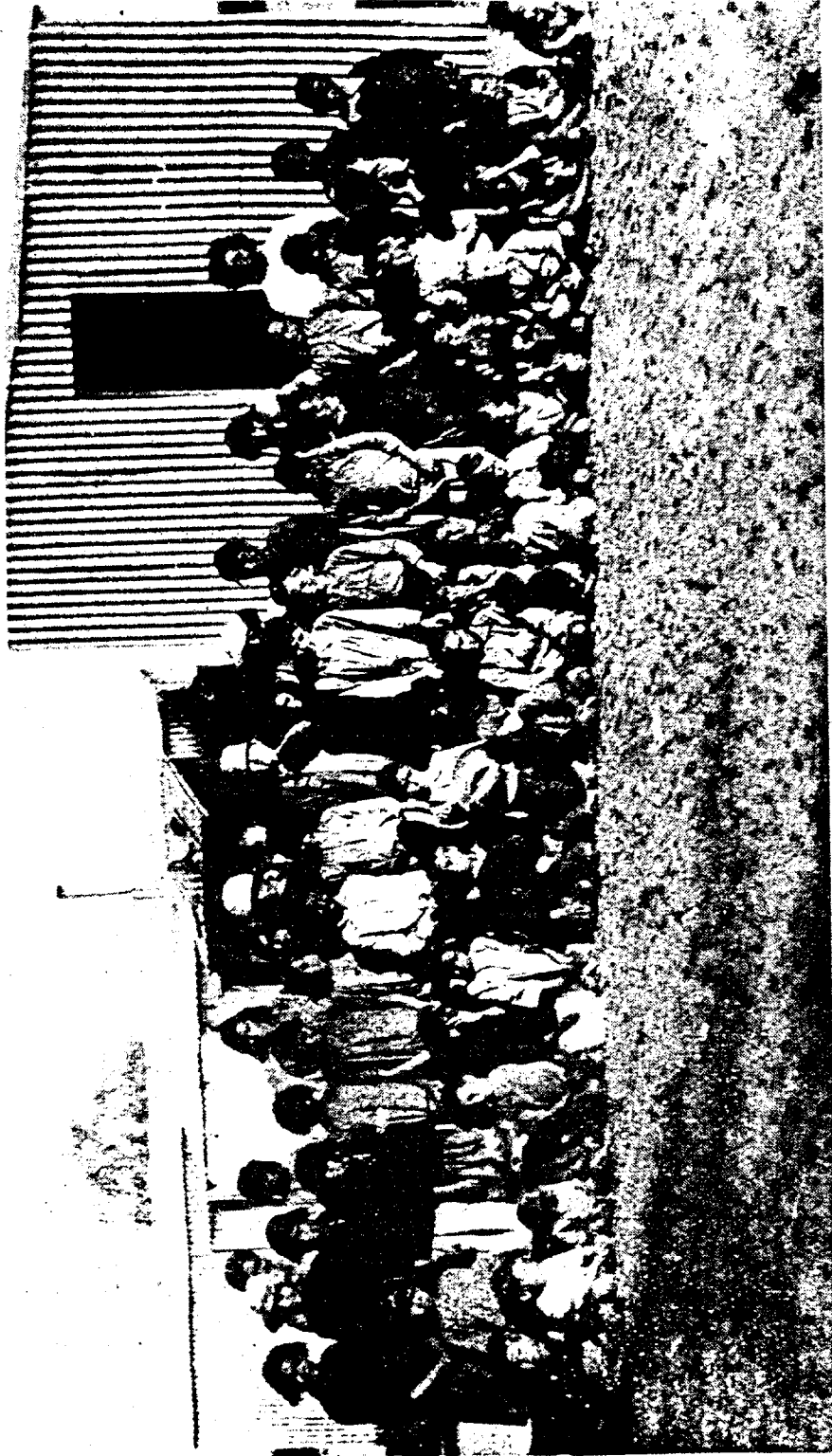
But there had been more than mere white movements and encroachments before 1928. Three natives were shot after Stewart was killed at the Granites. W. Barnes and J. Leahy had in 1910 shot a black who attacked them on the way to Tanami and 'once', south-west of the Granites, W. Oats is reputed to have been ordered to clear out by a mob of 300 blacks. In 1923 blacks at Tanami attacked T. Laurie; J. Saxby, a prospector, fired a dozen shots at blacks who raided his camp in 1925 and admitted that he shot to kill; in August 1926 the Walpari told Matthews of Mt. Peake that it was a fine day for travelling; and just before Brooks was killed C. Young and Carter, of the Mid Australian Exploration Company, who had been out after Wyckham's Find, had trouble with the blacks in the Coniston country<sup>(72)</sup>.

Nor did this sort of thing happen only in the Coniston area. Cattle killing was reported from all parts of Central Australia and isolated attacks were made on settlers. The number of prisoners in the gaol increased to capacity. One has to be careful as to which reports he believes, but there is abundant evidence that in 1928 trouble between black and white was brewing. And no real and just effort was being made to stop it. At Hermannsburg just before Brooks was killed the Government Resident and Commissioner of Police ominously remarked that it was time the blacks were taught a lesson<sup>(73)</sup>.

When the trouble did come and the blacks were 'taught a lesson' the outside world was ready for the first time widely to publicize and discuss it. There were many reasons for this, the basic one being that the aborigines in Central Australia and elsewhere were not getting a fair deal. Nasty incidents and squalid conditions gradually impressed themselves on Parliament, Press and public opinion until in 1928 a national conscience in relation to the aborigines was awakening. It must be remembered that this was really its first awakening and that Governmental attitude, though very humanitarian and optimistic in the early part of the nineteenth century, had since become despairing and apathetic<sup>(74)</sup>.

In 1904 Dr. W. E. Roth, appointed a one-man Royal Commission by the Western Australian Government, reported<sup>(75)</sup> on the disgusting conditions and treatment of the aborigines in the West. His report came as a revelation to many. More praise is due to him for his initiative and courage than to the Government for appointing him. The report grew more important over the years, being constantly referred to in arguments for the betterment of the aborigines.

Throughout the 'twenties the 'Half-Caste Problem' was one of the most discussed topics concerning Central Australia. In 1913 the Administrator of the Northern Territory, after a visit to Central Australia, wrote in his official report<sup>(76)</sup> concerning the disgusting conditions of the half-castes there; in 1922 a Sectional Committee of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on



INMATES OF HALF-CASTE BUNGALOW, ALICE SPRINGS  
From *Bleakley's Report*,  
C.P.P., 1929, II, 1215.

Public Works reported<sup>(77)</sup> to the House of Representatives concerning the disgraceful 'Bung' for half-castes at Alice Springs and W. B. Spencer followed this up with a report in 1923. But, as the Government persisted in doing nothing to remedy matters, except for making an unsuccessful attempt to find water in a suitable locality for a half-caste home, the matter was taken up by associations interested in the welfare of the aborigines and the Press and it was discussed heatedly before and after the Coniston killings. Centralians had brought the eyes of Australia upon themselves<sup>(78)</sup>.

However, the killing of a number of aborigines by a police party in June 1926 after the murder of Hay in the Kimberleys and the subsequent report<sup>(79)</sup> by Royal Commissioner G. Wood on the affair aroused more interest in the aborigines than any other incident before 1928. Missions and societies concerned for the welfare of the aborigines (there were approximately thirty in Australia at that time) the southern Press and Members of Parliament gave vent to their horror and indignation<sup>(80)</sup>.

This incident was directly responsible for the setting up of a Royal Commission to inquire fully into the conditions of aborigines and half-castes in North and Central Australia. In April 1927 a deputation consisting of representatives of the Association for the Protection of Native Races of Australia and Polynesia, the Australian Board of Missions, the Women's League and other associations presented a petition to the Federal Parliament asking for a Royal Commission<sup>(81)</sup>. Another petition

(82)  
was presented in May of the same year . At last, in  
October 1927, Jackson, in the House of Representatives, moved  
for a Joint Select Committee to inquire into the matter. In  
the debates on the motion then and in November Roth's report  
and the 'Kimberley atrocities' were referred to fairly frequent-  
ly, and a unanimous desire for an investigation displayed<sup>(83)</sup>.  
Over the seas people were beginning to show an interest in the  
problem and their representations were not without effect on  
sensitive Australian ears. Late in 1927, for example, a  
deputation waited on the Australian High Commissioner in London  
and pleaded for an investigation<sup>(84)</sup>. By March 1928 Mr.  
Bleakley, Chief Protector of Aborigines in Queensland, had been  
appointed a one-man Royal Commission to make the inquiry, which  
he began in June.

At the same time there was a strong movement for more  
native reserves in Australia. The Aborigines' Protection  
League, which originated in Adelaide in 1925, was in the fore-  
front of this movement. It was influenced by current ideas  
of Indirect Rule and had its eyes on parts of Central Australia  
(though chiefly on Arnhem Land) as a likely place for a 'Model  
Aboriginal State'. It had supporters in the Federal Parlia-  
ment, Messrs Makin and Parsons, and the keen support in this  
matter of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society,  
London, as indicated by that society's letter to the Minister  
for Home and Territories of July 1926<sup>(86)</sup>. Other associations

such as the Aborigines' Friends' Association of South Australia, while disagreeing on many points with the Aborigines' Protection League, supported the movement for more reserves and the matter provoked not a little discussion in the Press<sup>(87)</sup>.

Anthropologists also, after an initial stimulus by W. B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen in the 1890's, were taking a keener interest in the aborigines of Central Australia, not only because Central Australia was a rich field for study, but because many of them felt that if they did not act immediately the aborigines would die out before much valuable scientific data concerning them could be collected. Professor Radcliff-Brown firmly believed that they were on the path to extinction<sup>(88)</sup> and an expedition from the University of Adelaide set out in 1926 to obtain data 'before the race dies out'<sup>(89)</sup>. Naturally enough the anthropologists pressed for inviolable reserves. Some called them 'anthropological zoos', all provoked discussion. And though many anthropologists regarded the aborigines as little more than scientific data on legs this was a step forward from regarding them as cattle. Indeed, some bold spirits were already beginning to declare that the aborigine is not necessarily and inherently inferior to the white man<sup>(90)</sup>.

The missionaries likewise did their bit in attracting public attention to Central Australia and the aborigines. In the 'twenties reports from Hermannsburg Mission appeared regularly with the Administrator's or Government Resident's reports; and

ever since the Aborigines' Friends' Association <sup>began to support</sup> a missionary in Central Australia in 1922 it showed increasing interest in the aborigines there and did much to publicize the country<sup>(91)</sup>. Rev. J. H. Sexton, for example, visited and reported on it in 1925<sup>(92)</sup>. And the very presence of the missionaries provoked both criticism and praise.<sup>(93)</sup>

By 1928 educated aborigines were speaking out on behalf of their fellows and others were making a name for themselves. Natives of Point Pearce wrote letters to the South Australian Press<sup>(94)</sup>. A deputation of aborigines waited on the Premier of Western Australia in 1928 asking for equal rights<sup>(95)</sup>; and natives like David Uniapon<sup>(96)</sup> and Rev. James Noble<sup>(97)</sup> were known for their intellectual attainments. They all helped to attract attention to their fellows in all parts of Australia.

The Southern Press, of course, must be given its due for publishing these and other matters. It possessed thoroughly White Australian ears, very sensitive to overseas opinion<sup>(98)</sup>; Nevertheless, it was prepared, partly because of a desire to remedy matters, widely to publicize the incidents of 1928. The extent of its zeal was demonstrated, for example, by the outcry in its pages in August 1927 when some sacred stones were reported stolen from Centralian aboriginal caves. It was learnt later that the story was entirely without foundation<sup>(99)</sup>.

In Central Australia itself in 1928 the old order was changing and there was a general quickening of interest in the



country. Six hundred men were gradually bridging the gap between the railway termini of Alice Springs and Oodnadatta<sup>(100)</sup>; tourists were beginning to take an interest in the countryside<sup>(101)</sup>; motor cars were being registered<sup>(102)</sup>; and Hussein Khan, symbol of the old order and the old methods of communication, had made his last trip<sup>(103)</sup> from Oodnadatta to Alice Springs as custodian of the Royal Mail.

Chapter I.

STAMPING GROUND.

REFERENCES.

1. Outback expression for 'orbit of activities'.
2. See, e.g., H.E.C. Robinson Ltd., The Discovery and Exploration of Australia, (map - n.d.); C.T. Madigan, Central Australia, Melb., 1944, p. 35.
3. There is no real watershed between the Lander and the Old Marsh Bed, with which it used to be marked on maps as continuous. See the map appended to M. Terry's Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, London, 1931 and H.E.C. Robinson, Ltd., Map of the Northern Territory showing pastoral stations, etc., (1930) and compare them with any modern map.
4. Variously known as Walpari, Walpiri, Wailbri, Ilparra. N.B. Tindale's Map Showing the Distribution of the Aboriginal Tribes of Australia (1940) has 'Walpari' but Tindale (interview with the author, 13/4/60) now thinks that 'Walpiri' is more correct. 'Walpari' is used throughout by the author.
5. C.T. Madigan, Central Australia, p.96; F.G.G. Rose, 'The Pastoral Industry in the Northern Territory, etc., 1911 - 1953,' in Historical Studies, vol. 6, p.151.
6. D. Lockward, Crocodiles and Other People, London, 1959, p.161; cf. F.E. Baum, Tragedy Track: the Story of the Granites, Sydney, 1933, pp. 49, 166.
7. M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, *passim*; e.g. p. 155.
8. For a general description of this area see *ibid.*, *passim*; C.T. Madigan, Central Australia, p. 237-8; A.A. Davidson, Journals, South Aust. P. F., No. 27 of 1905, pp. 45-63, *passim*; J.B. Cleland, 'Anthropological Expedition into Central Australia', in Medical Journal of Australia, December 19, 1931, pp. 131 f.
9. Exactly or even approximately when is unknown. See A.P. Elkin, The Australian Aborigines, Sydney, 1956, p. 7; E.J.B. Foxcroft, Australian Native Policy, M.U.P., 1941, p. 13.
10. See Foxcroft, *ibid.* pp. 11-12, 15; M.M. Bennett, The Australian Aborigine as a Human Being, pp. 14-15, 129-30; Elkin, *ibid.*, pp. 16, 18 and *passim*. cf. D.J. Stenning, Savannah Nomads etc, O.U.P., 1959.
11. cf. Adelaide Advertiser, 18/5/1929.

12. R.M. and C.H. Berndt, The First Australians, Sydney, 1952, p. 36.
13. cf. ibid, p. 21; E.J.B. Foxcroft, Australian Native Policy, pp. 18-19; A.P. Elkin, The Australian Aborigines, pp. 27, 44, 50, 108-9; Dr. D. Thomson, Recommendations of Policy, etc., CPP, 1937-40, III, 812; R.H. Berndt, 'The Concept of "the Tribe" in the Western Deserts of Australia' in Oceania, vol XXX, No. 2, p. 81 f.
14. T.G.H. Strehlow, Dark and White Australians, Adel., 1957, p. 6.
15. ibid. Mr. W.G. Murray possesses documents relative to the Barrow Creek Massacre.
16. C.L.A. Abbott, Australia's Frontier Province, Sydney, 1950, p. 163; Commonwealth Year Book, No. 20, p. 576; Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory (1920), CPP, 1920-1, III, 1717.
17. Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory, ibid.
18. A. Giles, The First Pastoral Settlement in the Northern Territory, p. 47. A station is always 'formed' in the outback.
19. M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 251. B. Bowman, Letter to the author, 3/5/60.
20. R.B. Stafford, Interview with the author, 7/4/60. B. Bowman, ibid.
21. In the possession of N.B. Tindale; cf. W. Morton (per B.S. Sandford), 'Report of an attack by blacks on me with intent to murder, etc.,' in File of Papers (see bibliography, I(a) )
22. None of the old Centralians whom I have interviewed or corresponded with have ever heard of the name 'Broadmeadows'. Morton and Constable Murray used the name frequently. See their depositions before V. Garrington, 1929, in File of Papers (Inquest into the death of fourteen aborigines); and Proceedings of the Board of Enquiry pp. 53, 54, 56, 62 (see bibliography, I(a), under 'File of Papers'). I am indebted to T.G.H. Strehlow for the 'life line' suggestion.

23. Mrs. W. Heffernan, Mrs. D.R. Braitling, B. Bowman, Letters to the author 10/5/60, 14/5/60 and 3/5/60 respectively; Director of Lands (H.C. Barclay), Northern Territory Administration, Letters to the author 20/4/60 and 10/5/60. Some of the dates in the above paragraph are necessarily only approximate. The Lands Records are incomplete and confusing - see North Australia Commission, Second Annual Report (1928), CPP 1929-31, IV, pp. 321-323.
24. An approximate figure. See Northern Standard 17/1/28, 17/2/28; Report on the Administration of Central Australia (1928) CPP, 1929, II, 1277; M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 235.
25. R.B. Stafford, Interview with the author, 7/4/60; A. Giles, The First Pastoral Settlement in the Northern Territory, p. 22; R.B. Flouman, The Man from Oodnadatta, Sydney, 1933, p. 95.
26. A. Giles, ibid, p. 49; R.B. Stafford, Letter to the Editor, Pastoral Review, 16/2/29, p. 165; F.E. Baume, Tragedy Track, p. 43-4; Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory (1912) CPP, 1913, III, 330. For the position of the tribes see N.B. Tindale's map (1940). A new map is in preparation (1960) but Tindale declares that the tribal boundaries of the north-western part of Central Australia as depicted on the old map will not have to be altered.
27. R.B. Stafford, Interview with the author, 7/4/60.
28. See photograph facing p.5/ (below).
29. cf. M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 227; A. Russell, A Tramp-Royal in Wild Australia, London, 1934, p. 93; C.T. Madigan, Central Australia, pp. 9 - 12 and passim.
30. Director of Lands, Northern Territory Administration, Letters to the author, 20/4/60 and 10/5/60; cf. Commonwealth Gazette, Ordinances 9 of 1927 and 14 of 1927; Reports on the Administration of Central Australia, CPP 1929, II, 1277; 1929-31, III, 2911; First, Second and Third Annual Reports of North Australia Commission, CPP 1926-8, II, 1966; 1929-31, IV, 305 and 347.
31. cf. frontis piece (above) and photograph facing p.5/ (below) for Coniston 'homestead'. Morton, further down the Lander, did not have a house of any description, but merely 'camped'. See also C.L.A. Abbott, Australia's Frontier Province, p. 118; Adelaide Advertiser, 29/11/28.

32. Half-castes.
33. M.M. Bennett, The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being, p. 74. In 1903-4 there were 1,500 men at Arltunga and Winnecke Depot - Northern Standard, 17/2/28.
34. Report on the Administration of Central Australia (1929 - 30) CFP 1929-31, III, 2911, 2913. If J.W. Bleakley's figures are correct (The Aborigines and Half-Castes of Central Australia and North Australia - Report, CFP 1929, II, 1185) the ratio in 1928 was higher than 3:4.
35. T.G.H. Strehlow, Interview with the author, 6/4/60; cf. Adelaide Register, 13/9/1924, 18/7/25 (poem), 5/9/28; News 14/3/29 (letter from A. Lock); Northern Standard, 10/7/1928; J.W. Bleakley, ibid, 1169, 1185-6; Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory (1922) CFP 1923-4, IV, 1884; Rev. W. Morley to Abbott, 20/4/29 in File of Papers; Proceedings of the Board of Enquiry, pp. 27, 36; A.G. Price, History and Problems of the Northern Territory, Australia, Adel., 1930, p. 27; E. Hill, The Great Australian Loneliness, London, 1937, p. 207.
36. J.W. Bleakley, ibid, 1164; M.M. Bennett, The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being, pp. 100-101.
37. R.B. Stafford, Interview with the author 7/4/60; cf. J.W. Bleakley, ibid; M.M. Bennett, ibid and Proceedings of the Board of Enquiry p. 6.
38. cf. Chapter V, footnotes 30 - 32 and text (below)
39. Probably the first motor car in Central Australia was brought to the Finke by J.A. Breaden in 1917: see A. Russell, A Tramp-Royal in Wild Australia, p. 146.<sup>1</sup> 1928 planes first landed in at Alice Springs - CFP, 1929, II, 1275.
40. A. Russell, ibid, p. 117-8; Register, 6/2/29.
41. C.T. Madigan, Central Australia, pp. 102-3. Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory, CFP 1925, II, 2542.
42. C.T. Madigan, ibid; CFP, vol. 116 (1927), p. 510; J.W. Bleakley, Report (loc. cit.), p. 37 (separately bound).
43. M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 217.

44. cf. ibid pp. 217, 236 and the inscription on Brooks' tombstone (Chapter V, footnote 38 and text).
45. A general term used in the Northern Territory to denote all people who are not outbackers, especially those of the capital cities. It is not as inaccurate as is sometimes supposed, for all of Central Australia lies north of Brisbane.
46. W.G. Murray, Interview with the author, 12/4/60; cf. Register 24/7/25 (letter); M. Terry, ibid, pp. 159, 235, 315; Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory (1924) CPP 1925, II, 2541.
47. Northern Standard 6/7/28; Melbourne Argus 19/1/29; M.M. Bennett, The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being, p. 13; cf. CPD vol. 116 (1927) pp. 510, 515.
48. cf. M.M. Bennett, ibid, p. 99; J.W. Bleakley, Report (loc. cit.), 1164, 1190; Dr. D. Thomson, Recommendations of Policy etc., (loc. cit.) 809, 811; H. Basedow, Knights of the Boomerang, Sydney, 1935, p. 14. There is no evidence in any land records that the country Wyckham and Tilmouth were using on the Lander in 1928 (see footnote 70 and text, below) was leased or held under grazing licence.
49. A.G. Price, History and Problems of the Northern Territory, p. 35; cf. CPD vol. 112 (1926) 820f; London Times, 17/12/1926.
50. Report on the Administration of Central Australia (1930), CPP 1929-31, III, 2906. See also Report of the Board of Inquiry Appointed to Inquire into the Land and Land Industries of the Northern Territory of Australia, CPP. 1937 - 40, III, 913. For criticisms of the Act and Commission see Northern Standard, 17/1/28 ('Darwin the Damned'); CPD vol. 113, (1926), 2109f and vol. 120, 1249; C.L.A. Abbott, Australia's Frontier Province, p. 34.
51. CPD, vol. 113 (1926), 2116, 2133; vol. 116 (1927) 510; Northern Standard, 14/8/28.
52. See CPD, vol. 116 (1927) p.363; and his reports on the administration of Central Australia, CPP 1929, II, 1273f., 1929-31, III, 2891f.
53. See Chapters IV & V (below). The name of the Department was changed to 'Home Affairs' late in 1928.

54. CPD , vol. 112 (1926), 820 and 823. For the wordy emphasis on development before and after 1927, often at the expense of the natives, see ibid, 820f; vol. 113 (1926), 2113f.; Report by Dr. V. Stefansson on Central Australia, CPP 1923-4, II, 333; Advertiser 20/11/25 (Ed.), 3/9/28; Register 21/12/25; Northern Standard, 23/3/28; M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, passim; cf. Report of the Board of Inquiry Appointed to Inquire into the Land and Land Industries, etc., (loc. cit.), 830.
55. Northern Standard, 17/2/28; see also Register, 18/9/24; Report by a Sectional Committee of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works on Various Matters appertaining to the Territory, etc., (1922) CPP, 1922, II, 2967; Dr. D. Thomson, Recommendations (loc. cit.), 809; J.W. Bleakley, Report (loc. cit.) p. 37 (separately bound.)
56. Proceedings of the Board of Enquiry, p. 61; F.E. Baume, Tragedy Track, pp. 38, 106f; minute by J.R.H., 18/9/28 in File of Papers; and see File of Papers and footnote 66a (below) for Cawood's repeated requests for more police.
57. Rev. J.H. Sexton, Australian Aborigines, (Adelaide), 1943, p. 51.
58. Northern Standard, 27/3/28; Smith's Weekly, 23/3/29; T.G.H. Strehlow, Interview with the author, 6/4/60. Shortly after taking his leave Stott was killed in an accident in Adelaide - Northern Standard, 8/5/28,
59. Ordinance No. 22 of 1928 (Commonwealth Gazette, 8/11/28).
60. Ordinance No. 8 of 1929 (Commonwealth Gazette, 1/6/29). cf. Northern Standard 19/10/28, 23/10/28, 17/1/28.
61. Cawood to Clemens, 6/12/28, in File of Papers; Proceedings of the Board of Enquiry, Exhibit 10. See also Northern Standard, 17/3/28.
62. F.E. Baume, Tragedy Track, pp. 37, 62; CPD vol. 122 (1929) p. 23; cf. Register 11/11/29, 12/11/ 29, 15/11/29.
63. cf. CPD vol. 121 (1929), 338.
64. Miss Lock quitted Harding Soak in October, 1928 - Proceedings of the Board of Enquiry, p. 36.

65. The Government provided 8 depots, 5 of them at police stations. Kramer did not really have a 'depot' but carried provisions about on 5 camels; Lock's depot was but poorly equipped. See map appended to Bleakley's Report (appended); News, 9/2/27; Register, 12/9/28; Aborigines' Friends' Association, Annual Report, 1923, p. 8; 1926, p. 2. Mr. Kramer was regarded at first as being merely 'supported' by the A.F.A.
66. Northern Standard, 17/2/28; C.L.A. Abbott, Australia's Frontier Province, p. 35; Report on the Administration of Central Australia (1928), CPP 1929, II, 1273. See table of rainfall, 1874-1936, CPP 1937-40, III, 922.
- 66a. Cawood to Clemens 8/9/28; 6/12/28; Cowres to Hometer (telegraphic address) 4/9/28 in File of Papers.
67. See Reports on the Administration of Central Australia, 1928 and 1929, CPP 1929, II, 1273f. and 1929-31, III, 2891f.
68. This matter is still disputed. Some evidence for my conclusion may be found in the following:  
Advertiser 21/9/28, 13/12/28, 18/12/28, 20/12/28, 17/7/30; Northern Standard, 17/2/28, 21/1/29; Register, 12/8/29, 11/9/28, 29/12/28; Northern Territory Times 18/9/28, 9/11/28, 16/11/28, 18/12/28, 19/12/28; News 14/3/29; Argus 24/7/29; J. Bleakley, Report (loc. cit.) passim; Proceedings of the Board of Enquiry, pp. 27, 36, 38; Rev. J.H. Sexton, Special Report on Native Problems in Central Australia, Adel., 1932; W.G. Murray (Interview with the author 7/4/60) admits that some were thirsty, but not hungry; and see Report on the Administration of Central Australia (1930) CPP 1929-31, III, 2906 and 2913.
69. Proceedings of the Board of Enquiry, pp. 41, 43, 45, 57; R.B. Stafford, Interview with the author, 7/4/60; Letter to the Editor, Pastoral Review, 16/2/29, p. 165; cf. Sgt. C.H. Noblet, Report 're natives killed by Police Party', 8/12/28, in File of Papers.
70. R.B. Stafford, Interview with the author, 7/4/60; M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 218, 219 and appended map; according to a schedule in the papers of the Pastoral Investigation Committee, compiled between 1921 and 1933 (exact date unknown) Napperby was carrying more head than 'stocking conditions' allowed (Chief Archivist of the Commonwealth National Library, Letter to the author, 19/5/60). The main evidence for overstocking remains oral.



71. His claim (Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 154) that one of the drawings represented a motor car is somewhat incredible and the accompanying photograph is not convincing. See ibid pp. 106, 145, 148, 166-7, 195, 203; A. Davidson, Journals (loc. cit.); Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory (1926), CPP 1926-8, II, 2053; F.E. Baume, Tragedy Track, pp. 43-4, 137.
72. Proceedings of the Board of Enquiry, Exhibit 9, pp. 14, 23, 47; Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory (1912), CPP 1913, III, 330; M. Terry, ibid, pp. 110, 160-1, 163, 241, 288-9; R.B. Stafford, Letter to the Editor, Pastoral Review, 16/2/29, p. 165.
73. Rev. F. W. Albrecht, Letter to the author, 18/4/60. For the cattle killing etc. see footnotes 69-72 (above) and Proceedings of the Board of Enquiry, pp. 5, 7, 8, 14, 16, 23-25, 32, 35, Exhibit 8; Report on the Administration of Central Australia (1929) CPP 1929-31, III, 2900; Cawood to Clemens 11/8/28, 6/12/28 in File of Papers; Register 8/9/28, 12/9/28.
74. E.J.B. Foxcroft, Australian Native Policy, pp. 22-23; P. Hasluck, Black Australians, M.U.P., 1942, pp. 13, 42, 61-63, 120, 160, 203; A.P. Elkin, The Australian Aborigines, pp. 325-6; M.M. Bennett, The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being, p. 10; cf. London Times, 17/12/26; Sydney Morning Herald, 8/3/29.
75. Minutes and V & P of the Parliament of Western Australia 1905, Vol. I, No. 5.
76. CPP 1914-17, II, 1314.
77. CPP 1922, II, 2965f; CPD vol. 116 (1927) p. 512.
78. See, e.g., CPD, ibid; Register 13/9/24, 15/9/24, 16/9/24, 17/9/24, 18/9/24, 1/11/24, 6/11/24, 15/7/25, 16/7/25, 18/7/25, 21/7/25, 20/7/26; Advertiser 9/10/24, 30/10/24, 31/10/24, 10/11/24, 22/3/26, 25/3/26, 16/7/26.
79. Minutes and V & P of the Parliament of Western Aust., 1927, Vol. I, No. 3.
80. e.g., Sydney Morning Herald 26/3/27, 7/5/27, 28/5/27, 1/6/27, 2/6/27, 11/8/28, 13/8/28, 27/10/27; Argus 8/3/27; Advertiser 30/5/27; Register 30/5/27; CPD Vol. 116 (1927) pp. 508-9, 531-2, 957.
81. CPD, ibid, pp. 518-23, 528.
82. Aborigines' Protection League, Report of the Hon. Secretary to the State Executive etc., (appended to

82. a copy of Bleakley's Report bound separately in the Public Library of S.A.); Register 4/5/27; cf. Advertiser 6/6/27.
83. CPD vol. 116 (1927) pp. 507f, 955f; vol. 117 (1927) p. 2707f.
84. CPD, ibid, p. 2754.
85. CPD, ibid, pp. 4292, 5371; J.W. Bleakley, Report (loc. cit.) 1163.
86. See CPD vol. 116 (1927) p. 529; also pp. 514f, 956f, 813-4; Aborigines' Protection League, A Statement etc. (appended to a copy of Bleakley's Report bound separately in the Public Library of South Aust.); Advertiser 2/4/25; Argus 24/7/29. 'Arnhem' was spelt 'Armeim' in 1928.
87. Register 1/4/25, 9/4/26, 4/1/28, 12/1/28; Advertiser 29/3/26, 5/4/26, 8/4/26, 9/3/26, 14/7/26, 5/1/28; London Times 7/4/26; cf. Chapter V, footnote 7 and text (below).
88. Sydney Morning Herald 14/3/28 - The notion was wide spread - see Advertiser 17/4/25, 29/3/26, 25/7/27, 24/1/28; Melbourne Herald 25/2/28; A.C. Neville, Australia's Coloured Minority, Sydney, (1947?), p. 74; E.R. Gribble, A Despised Race etc., Sydney, 1933, p. 14; A.P. Elkin, The Australian Aborigines, p. 326; F.W. Jones, Australia's Vanishing Race, Sydney, 1934, pp. 6, 38-39; M.M. Bennett, The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being, p. 15; S.H. Roberts, Population Problems of the Pacific, London, 1927, pp. 58, 128.
89. Advertiser 15/12/26.
90. cf. ibid. 25/5/29, 28/2/29; CPD vol. 116 (1927) pp. 510, 515; Chapter V, footnote 59 and text (below). For the general attitude of anthropologists and their increasing interest and activities see A.P. Elkin, The Australian Aborigines, pp. vi - vii, 327; E.J.B. Foxcroft, Australian Native Policy, pp. 6, 135; M.M. Bennett, The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being pp. 20 (footnote), 33; A.P. Elkin, 'A New Anthropological Society', in Oceania, vol XXIX, No. 3, p. 227.
91. Rev. J. H. Sexton, Australian Aborigines, (Adel.) 1934, p. 10-11; Aborigines' Friends' Association, Annual Reports, 1922-28, passim; Register 21/3/23, 13/12/24, 13/9/24, 17/9/24, 18/7/25; News 9/2/27; Advertiser 1/6/28.

92. Aborigines' Friends' Association, Annual Report, 1925, p. 9f; Register 15/7/25, 18/7/25.
93. See, e.g., Register 17/9/24, 18/9/24, 29/1/27; J.W. Bleakley, Report (loc. cit.) 1182; Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory (1925) CPP, 1926-8, II, 1997.
94. Register 21/12/27.
95. Advertiser 10/3/28.
96. CPD vol. 116 (1927) pp. 511, 515; Register 6/10/25.
97. CPD, ibid; Rev. E.R. Gribble, A Despised Race, p. 128; cf. Rev. G. Rowe, Sketches of Outstanding Aborigines, Adel., (1956).
98. See, e.g., Advertiser 22/11/28. (By 'the northern Press' is meant the Northern Territory Times and the Northern Standard and by 'the southern Press' the metropolitan papers listed in the bibliography). The northern Press shared this sensitiveness but was inclined rather to make light of atrocities than to try to get steps taken to prevent them.
99. Advertiser 20/8/27; Register 29/2/28; cf. also Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory (1924), CPP, 1925, II, 2541.
100. Advertiser 23/8/28; cf. Register 31/8/28. The first train arrived in Alice Springs on 6/8/29 (Advertiser 7/8/29). The building of the railway added fuel to the discussion of 'the Half-Caste Problem' - see footnote 78 (above), Advertiser 25/10/27, 24/3/26; 14/7/26, 22/8/27.
101. Report on the Administration of Central Australia (1928), CPP 1929, II, 1275; Register, 15/11/28; cf. A. Russell, A Tramp-Royal in Wild Australia, p. 125.
102. cf. footnote 39 (above); C.T. Madigan, Central Australia pp. 57-8, 71; Register 3/5/29. The police department possessed a motor car in 1928, having asked for one in 1924 (CPP 1925, II, 2557).
103. R.S. Sampson, Through Central Australia, Perth, 1933, p. 7.

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Chapter 2.

HUISHTA, BLACK MAN! <sup>(1)</sup>

In August 1928 friction between black and white came to a head in the Coniston country. Stafford's lubra, Alice, is reported to have warned him in July that the blacks were planning to kill him <sup>(2)</sup>. Cattle killing by natives increased, Turner on Napperby, T. Moar on Pine Hill and Stafford having trouble with them, until both Stafford and Moar asked that a police patrol should come out and arrest the culprits <sup>(3)</sup>.

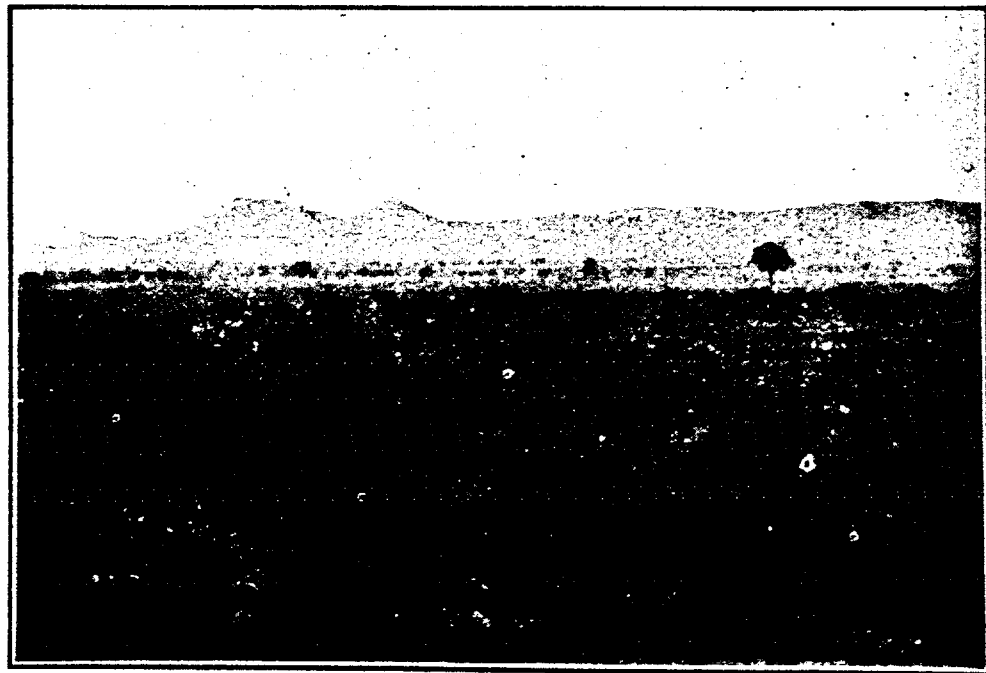
When Commissioner Cawood in Alice Springs received the message he sent Mounted Constable William George Murray out with two trackers, Paddy and Major, to investigate the complaints on both holdings. Soon after leaving Ryan's Well on August 11th, Murray was met on the road by Stafford who told him that his old mate Fred Brooks had been murdered by niggers at a water now known as Brook's Soak, fourteen miles west of Coniston <sup>(4)</sup>.

Brooks had been killed on August 7th. He was described as a kindly, inoffensive man, 65 years of age <sup>(5)</sup>. Stafford had met him years since in the Cooper country and when Coniston was first stocked Brooks came to join his mate, lest, says Stafford, he should come to harm at the hands of the blacks. Stafford was able to supply him with work there until 1928 when Brooks, seeing that the drought had made conditions hard for his employer also, decided to get work elsewhere. He had become eligible for the old age pension that very year but was of too independent a spirit to accept it. After working for a while at Napperby, he returned to Coniston with two camels, determined to try his hand at dogging <sup>(6)</sup>. He said that he would go fourteen miles west to a soakage and lay a few baits there. But Stafford, after warning him that to do so would be dangerous on account of

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The author at Brooks' grave.



In the mirage country.

Plate 5

From F. E. Baume, *Tragedy Trail*, 1933,  
facing p. 126

the blacks, suggested that he try his luck at a water close by Coniston: if he got any dogs, and Stafford was sure that he would, he would not go out west; if not, then he would go. No dingoes came that night. Brooks left Coniston on August 2nd, taking two camels and scran<sup>(7)</sup>, two of Stafford's wee-is<sup>(8)</sup>, Skipper and Dodger, and a couple of bullock hides from which to make pack-saddles<sup>(9)</sup>.

On the morning of August 7th, as the old man was quietly busying himself with the pack-saddles, kneeling to lace them up, a lubra grabbed him and a number of blacks rushed up and killed him. Placing a mosquito net about the body they carried it to a rabbit warren 170 yards away and thrust it partly down one of the burrows which, it is rumoured<sup>(10)</sup>, they had been enlarging before Brooks' eyes. Thereupon they placed Skipper and Dodger upon the camels which they had been tracking when the murder took place and sent them on to Coniston, telling them to tell Stafford that old man Brooks been die self and we fellow been proply sorry and been bury him<sup>(11)</sup>.

When they reached Coniston no white person was there. One of Stafford's boys rode twenty five miles down the Lander to where a young man, Bruce Chapman, was camped and told him the news. Chapman rode hard to Coniston where he met Alick Wilson, a half-caste, who had arrived the day before with the news that Joe Brown was dying out by Mt. Hardy. He wrote a hasty note to Stafford who was at Ti-tree Well at the time and gave it to Old Percy, one of Stafford's hands, who rode all night of the 10th to Ti-tree Well. Meanwhile Chapman paid a hurried visit to the scene of the murder, disinterred the body, found it horribly mutilated, and re-buried it. Then he went out to attend to Joe Brown<sup>(12)</sup>.

At 7 a.m. on the 11th of August Cawood received a telegram from Ti-Tree Well to the effect that Brooks had been murdered by blacks and Joe Brown was dying at Mt. Hardy. He immediately passed the news about Brooks on to the Department of Home and Territories in Canberra<sup>(13)</sup>. On the 13th it appeared in the southern papers and on the 14th in the London 'Times'.

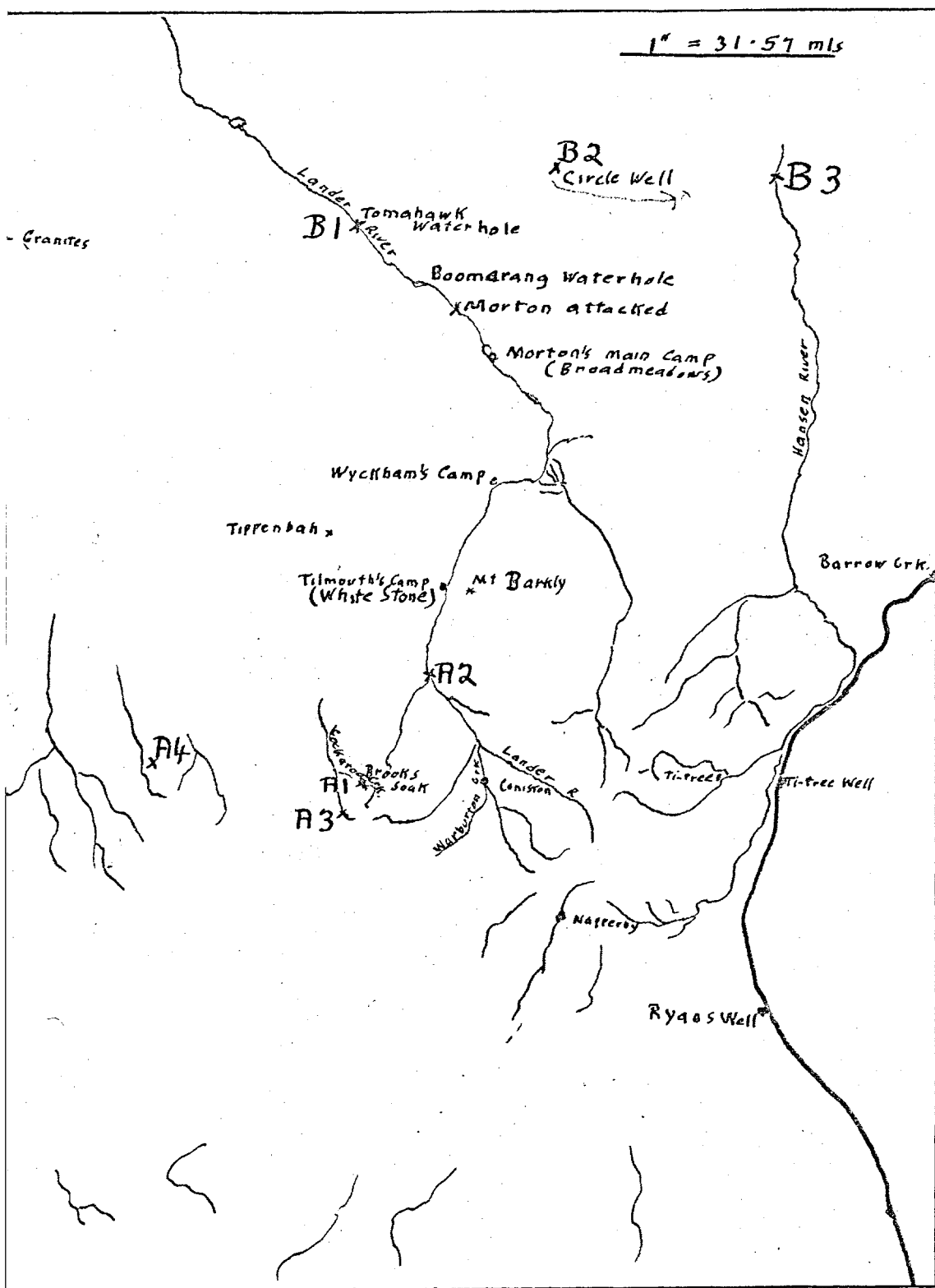
After being met on the road Murray returned to Ryan's Well where he received instructions from Cawood by telephone to proceed to the scene of the murder and arrest the culprits and to try to bring Joe Brown in. He was to avoid violence if possible, but should in no wise prejudice the lives of any of the police party<sup>(14)</sup>. From now on Murray had open slather. Cawood did not hear from him until September 1st.

Murray arrived at Coniston on August 12th. A tall, slim man with a slight Scotch accent and a reputation as a bushman, he set about organizing a party of civilians to help him in making the arrests. Joe Brown was either forgotten or left to the care of Chapman. Wilson was already at Coniston and Stafford came in on 15th or 16th. Saxby, a prospector, who was sinking a well twelve miles west of the homestead for Stafford at the time, joined them a few days later and Billy Briscoe arrived on the 15th after being sent for by Stafford<sup>(15)</sup>.

On the same day two natives, Woolingar and Padygar, came in from the west to the aboriginal camp near the homestead. Murray's trackers, Paddy and Major, who had been instructed by their boss to watch for any aborigines who might come in, tried to arrest them. They succeeded







Map showing the approximate position of the various encounters

in getting neck-chains on them and were struggling with them and trying to haul them towards Murray's parked car when Murray arrived on the scene and stepped in to keep his trackers. Woolingar wrenched himself free and struck at Murray with the chain. Murray drew his squirt and shot him in the forehead. He died fourteen days later; but he was by no means dead yet as Stafford demonstrated: he kicked him in the ribs and Woolingar sprang promptly to his feet. Both prisoners were chained to a tree for the night<sup>(16)</sup>.

On the morning of the 16th with a plant of fourteen horses, a party of eight comprising himself and his two trackers, the five civilians mentioned above and the boy Dodger, and the two prisoners, Murray set out for the soak where Brooks had been murdered. He had ascertained the names of twenty aborigines implicated in the murder, evidently from the two prisoners, who had 'volunteered' to take him to where they were camped<sup>(17)</sup>. Down South that day the papers printed the story of the first Maori to become a Bishop, together with an assertion by Edgar, a visiting Tibetan missionary, that Central Australian Aborigines were disgusting creatures<sup>(18)</sup>.

Up North Murray and his party came upon a camp of twenty-three aborigines fourteen miles west of Coniston and later admitted to shooting five including two lubras 'in self-defence' and 'whilst endeavouring to effect their arrest'<sup>(19)</sup>.

ENCOUNTER 1A

Murray buried the dead, collected and burnt the weapons and searched the camp, finding a number of articles belonging to Brooks<sup>(20)</sup>. Padygar showed him where Brooks

had been killed<sup>(21)</sup>. Then, after instructing the remainder of the natives to camp 200 yards down the creek, he and his party made camp for the night. Before retiring Murray and Wilson crept to within 100 yards of the native camp and watched for any natives who might come in. Sure enough, three wee-is came along, and after being caught and questioned 'volunteered' to show them tracks of some of the guilty ones<sup>(22)</sup>.

The party spent the whole of the next day searching in vain for these tracks. On the 18th they returned to Coniston with Woolingar and Padygar and one of the three wee-is named Lala, about eleven years old, as a witness. Stafford, the two prisoners, Lala and Jack, a police tracker recently sent up by Cawood as a reinforcement, remained at Coniston<sup>(23)</sup> while the remainder of the party (seven) set out on the morning of the 19th again in search of natives.

Down the Lander they went in a north-westerly direction to Boundary Soak, about twenty-five miles from Coniston, where they learnt from natives that some of the alleged murderers were at the Six Mile Soak. Hurrying there they found tracks leading south-west and followed them for ten miles, coming at last upon a native camp of twenty-one women and children and six males<sup>(24)</sup>.

Here in the darkness a second encounter took place and 'when order was restored' three males were found to be dead and three wounded.

ENCOUNTER 2A.

The wounded and a number of women and children were taken to Murray's camp at about midnight. When Murray awoke next morning he found that two of the prisoners were dead<sup>(25)</sup>.

The other one died at Briscoe's camp (Boundary Soak) whither the party returned after burying the dead. They then travelled south to the scene of Encounter 1A where they found no natives but tracks of bucks which had not been there before. After losing these in the ranges, they struck west to the only known water twenty miles distant. On the way they noticed two natives in the ranges a couple of miles distant. Murray sent his trackers after them, ordering the remainder of his party to spread out and cut off any would-be escapees. When Murray came up with his trackers he found that they had hand-cuffed two males and also detained an old blind man and two lubras. Paddy made a smoke to let the others know that the natives had been taken, but while this was being done the two prisoners slipped their handcuffs and ran.

Murray shot one with his revolver.

ENCOUNTER 3A

The other he picked off with his rifle. The lubras and the blind man were bushed after questioning. That was probably on August 23rd<sup>(26)</sup>.

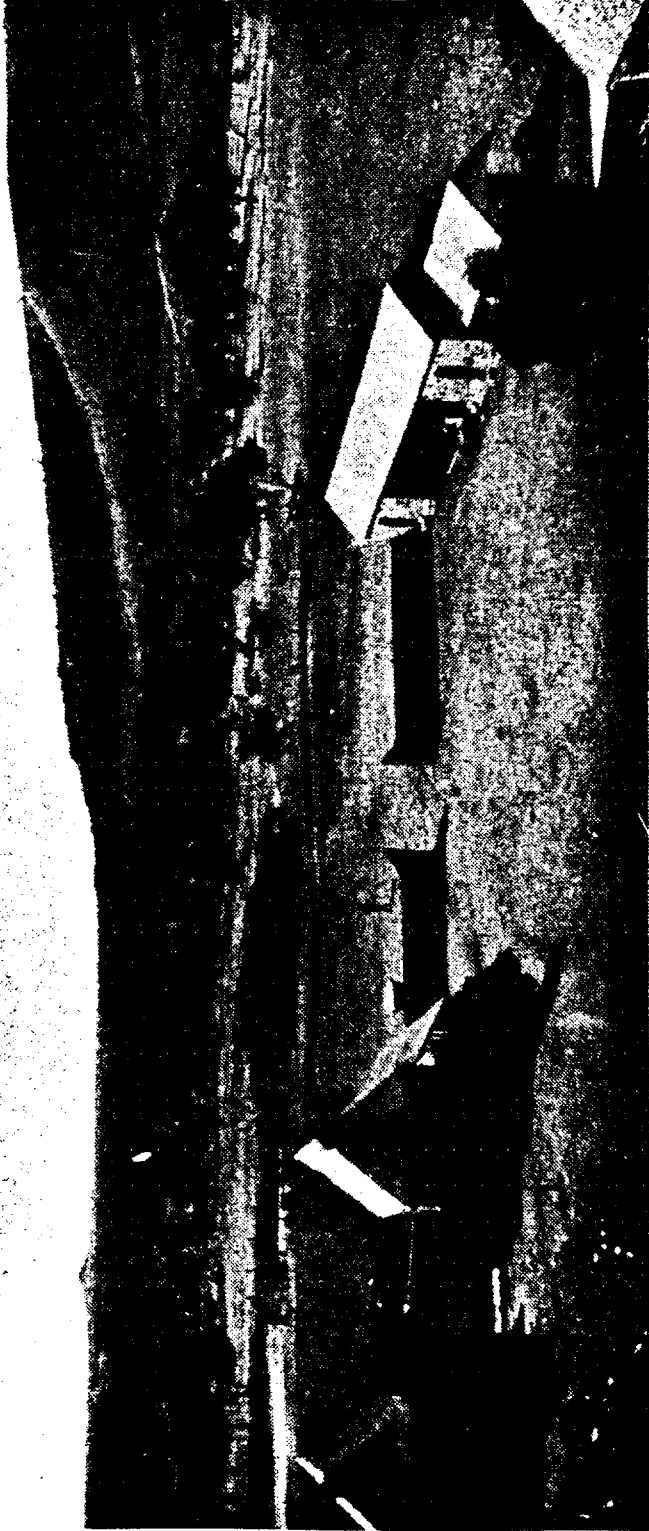
On August 27th some thirty six miles further west Murray saw two natives 'fast disappearing over the cliffs<sup>(27)</sup>. He and Wilson gave pursuit and Murray shot one. The other escaped. He later came ENCOUNTER 4A. upon one male and a number of lubras and children whom he detained. When he rejoined his party he found that they had two seriously wounded prisoners who died soon after<sup>(28)</sup>. The lubras and children were set free but the male, Akirkra, after pointing out where Brooks had been killed, was taken back to Coniston, where the party arrived, on the 30th in time to see Woolingar die<sup>(29)</sup>.

Murray arrived back at Alice Springs late on September 1st with Padygar and Akirkra on a charge of murder and witness Lala, and accompanied by his three trackers, thus completing a round trip of 846 miles<sup>(30)</sup>. So ended the shootings consequent upon the murder of Brooks. On the following day Murray officially reported that seventeen were shot in the four encounters<sup>(31)</sup>. He omitted to say by whom they were shot: for he did not know<sup>(32)</sup>.

Meanwhile in the South the "Advertiser" of 22/8/1928 carried an editorial on the South African racial problem assuring its readers of the absence of a colour problem in Australia, the envy of all Dominions. The Australian public was happily oblivious to the tragic events in the North.

But things were still happening there. On August 25th the report by Young and Carter concerning trouble with the Coniston blacks was brought to Cawood's notice by Sergeant Noblet<sup>(33)</sup>. Michael Terry had left the Granites on the 27th and had met scared natives in war-paint. On September 1st, the day Murray arrived at Alice Springs, he was at Coniston and has since written that Stafford and Saxby were out after more blacks on August 31st. He arrived at Alice Springs on September 3rd with Bruce Chapman who had contracted cerebral meningitis and who died shortly afterwards in the Australian Inland Mission Hostel, the only white man to have seen the body of Brooks<sup>(34)</sup>.

Terry also brought an urgent message from Stafford saying that one of the murderers had returned with others



Barrow Creek Telegraph Station.

From Madigan, C.T.,  
Central Australia,  
Melbourne, 1944,  
facing P 100

plate 6

and was causing depredations, and asking for assistance<sup>(35)</sup>. And the complaints from Pine Hill had not yet been attended to. Hence Murray was sent out on September 4th to Pine Hill and Coniston again<sup>(36)</sup>. On the same day Cawood telegraphed the Department of Home and Territories upon request that 'seventeen casualties' had been occasioned by Murray's party and asked for more police<sup>(37)</sup>. But the Press did not learn this until September 11th, when a Centralian resident (name undisclosed) arrived in Adelaide<sup>(38)</sup>. The Government was not divulging its secrets, for obvious reasons. On September 13th Murray arrived back from Coniston and Pine Hill with two prisoners<sup>(39)</sup>. That is all that is known about that patrol.

On September 16th Murray left for his police station at Barrow Creek. But he was not to stay there long. On August 28th 'Nugget' Morton had been attacked by aborigines near Boomerang waterhole, the one large water on the lower Lander still holding<sup>(40)</sup>, and had barely escaped with his life. After a fierce struggle and after shooting one of his assailants, Walgardu, he had managed to get to his main camp where he met his mate Sandford. The two rode over to Ti-tree Station where Bill Heffernan shaved Morton's head and dressed an ugly wound on it, and then to Ti-tree Well where Morton dictated a report of the attack to Sandford on the 30th, asking for 'a party to arrest the culprits'. He omitted to say that he had already shot one<sup>(41)</sup>.

This report evidently reached Cawood only on September 8th, for on that day he telegraphed the Department of Home and Territories concerning it and the newspapers printed the story. He then sent for Murray who arrived at Alice

Springs on September 19th and Morton's main camp (Broadmeadows) on the 24th<sup>(42)</sup>.

On the way Murray met Tilmouth at White Stone and learnt that he had been 'stuck up by a nigger' towards the end of August and had fired two shots to frighten him. On September 10th he had fired more shots at two 'niggers' who came to his camp at night. And on the 16th he had shot a native, Wangaridge, who had threatened him with a boomerang. On the same day he had set this down in writing and it later served as a deposition for Coroner Carrington when holding an inquest four months later into the death of Wangaridge. The last paragraph reads: 'The bullet entered his body over the heart. I have had no further trouble with the blacks'<sup>(43)</sup>. Tilmouth spent the rest of the night of the 16th under a cattle trough<sup>(44)</sup>. Huishta indeed! Ironically enough a notice appeared in the 'Government Gazette' about this time (21/9/1928) allowing the Darwin aborigines to see a film entitled 'The Fools Awakening'.

At Broadmeadows Murray got together another party composed of himself, Morton, Wilson, a small native boy and a plant of fourteen horses, and set off down the Lander to arrest the would-be murderers of Morton almost a month after the attack had been made<sup>(45)</sup>. On the way they secured three boys who were innocent and demanded that they show them where the guilty were. But the boys, young initiates, dared not disclose the secrets of their elders. For three days they fooled Murray, leading him to deserted camps and dry soaks. 'During the night they actually burned their feet to raw blisters and pounded their toes to pulp so that they could not walk.' Murray covered their feet with bags



and forced them to go on. Still they would not divulge their secret. At last Murray took one aside out of sight of the others and fired twice into the dust. They ~~then~~ then agreed to track for him <sup>(46)</sup>.

As a result they came upon seven adult male natives at Tomahawk waterhole. Four were shot 'in self-defence' and Morton declared that they had been his attackers. The three who remained alive were questioned and released after corroborating Morton's assertion <sup>(47)</sup>.

ENCOUNTER 1B

The party then rode up the Lander to Boomerang waterhole and north-east from there for about thirty miles and camped. On the following day they found tracks and followed them to Circle Well where they came upon a number of male natives. Two having refused to put down their weapons when called upon to do so by Morton, were shot when they attacked Murray while trying to arrest them <sup>(48)</sup>.

ENCOUNTER 2B

The party spent the next few days wandering about in search of more guilty ones. Eventually they came upon a camp of about forty, including nine <sup>adult</sup> males, on the lower Hansen River. They were now closer to Tennant Creek than to Barrow Creek and were living entirely on native foods <sup>(49)</sup>. Eight of the males were shot <sup>(50)</sup>.

ENCOUNTER 3B

Murray arrived back at Alice Springs on October 18th, almost a month after setting out. On the 19th he wrote an official report about the second shooting party, this time concealing the number killed; but he was later to

admit that fourteen had been shot in the three encounters and to claim at the same time that he had not mentioned the number shot because of his haste: he had to leave for Darwin on the following day<sup>(51)</sup>.

Oil had been let from the knees<sup>(52)</sup> of the Walpari but unrest continued in other parts of Central Australia. On October 18th, for example, the day on which Murray returned from Broadmeadows, twenty natives were consigned to the Alice Springs gaol: twelve for breaking into the store at Glen Helen Station; three for cattle killing at Glen Helen; and five for camel killing at Redbank<sup>(53)</sup>. On October 23rd L. Rosenbaum was attacked by Tarangan at Arltunga<sup>(54)</sup>. And Henty, a pastoralist of Frew River Station was murdered by 'Willaberta Jack' on December 15th<sup>(55)</sup>.

Murray meanwhile attended the trial of Padygar and Akirkra in Darwin, returning on November 20th in time to ride a couple of winners<sup>(56)</sup> at the Christmas race meeting at Alice Springs. In February 1929 he was sent out to assist in the arrest of 'Willaberta Jack', a move which brought protests from southern critics<sup>(57)</sup>. Later in the same year he left on a kindlier errand to recover the bodies of Andersen and Hitchcock whose plane had crashed south of Wavehill Station while they were searching for Kingsford Smith<sup>(58)</sup>.

Chapter 2.

HUISHTA, BLACK MAN.

REFERENCES.

1. 'Huishta' is an Arabic word, once used by Afghan camelers in Central Australia, meaning 'Go down!'. Controversial issues are side-stepped in this Chapter in the interests of a readily intelligible narrative. Only matters which can be fully established or which have to be accepted in the absence of other evidences are mentioned. The number of natives mentioned as killed, for example, is the established minimum: more may have been, and, in the author's opinion, more were killed.
2. Proceedings of the Board of Enquiry (henceforth Proceedings) p. 45; cf. Chapter I, footnote 69 and text (above)
3. Cawood to Clemens, 30/8/28, in File of Papers; R.B. Stafford, Letter to the Editor, Pastoral Review, 16/2/29, p. 165.
4. ibid; Proceedings, Exhibit 13.
5. ibid, pp. 5, 42, 45, 50; R.B. Stafford, Interview with the author, 7/4/60; Sgt. C.H. Noblet, Report 're Natives killed by Police Party', 8/12/28 in File of Papers; Northern Territory Times, 14/8/28. For a physical description of Brooks see Cawood to Clemens 11 (?)/10/28 in File of Papers.
6. i.e., poisoning dingoes.
7. Food for the track.
8. 'Wee-i' or 'wee-hi' is an aboriginal word meaning 'boy' in the ordinary sense of the word: a 'boy' in Centralian English is an adult aborigine working or capable of working for someone.
9. R.B. Stafford, Letter to the Editor, Pastoral Review 16/2/29, p. 165; Interview with the author, 7/4/60; 'Statement from Randle Stafford taken down by Robert Purvis at Tec-Tree Well (n.d. - August, 1928)'; W.G. Murray, 'Report re Fred Brooks, deceased, ....' 2/9/28, (according to which Brooks left Coniston on 3/8/28) in File of Papers; Advertiser 14/8/28; N.T. Times 14/8/28.
10. J. Hamlyn, Letter to the author, 7/4/60; R.B. Stafford, Letter to the Editor, Pastoral Review, 16/2/29, p. 165.
11. Both Stafford and Hamlyn (footnotes 9 & 10, above) used these words in relating the incident. For various accounts of the killing see Chapter IV (below) footnotes 97-105 and text. The account here given is based on sources indicated in footnote 9 (above) and Proceedings, p. 45.

12. W. G. Murray, 'Report re Fred Brooks, deceased, .... ' 2/9/28; B. Chapman, Letter (i.e. the note mentioned in the text) to 'Randle' Stafford, ?/8/28; Cawood to Clemens, 4/12/28 in File of Papers.
13. Govres to Hometer, 11/8/28; Cawood to Clemens 30/8/28 in File of Papers.
14. ibid. Cawood to Clemens 25/10/28 in File of Papers.
15. Inquest into the death of 17 aborigines, depositions of J. Saxby and W. Briscoe, 13/1/29, in File of Papers; Proceedings, pp. 42, 44, 46.
16. R.B. Stafford, Interview with the author, 7/4/60; Inquest into the death of 17 aborigines, depositions of W. Briscoe, J. Saxby, W.G. Murray, R.B. Stafford (13/1/29); deposition of W.G. Murray before E. Allchurch, S.M. (n.d. - a copy of the original made in connexion with the trial of 15/9/28 in Alice Springs) in File of Papers; Proceedings pp. 10, 11, 13, 42-44, 50, 53; Northern Standard 9/11/28; N.T. Times 9/11/28; Woolingar is sometimes referred to as 'Willingar'.
17. Proceedings p. 50; and see pp. 42, 44, 46, 50; W.G. Murray, 'Report re Fred Brooks, deceased, ..... ' 2/9/28, in File of Papers.
18. e.g. Advertiser and Register. See J.H. Edgar, Exploration of the Great Reserves, etc., Adel., 1928, and note the capital made of his assertions by the Department of Home and Territories in 'A Summing up of the Position,' 23/11/28 - File of Papers.
19. Proceedings pp. 50, 51, 42, 44, 46; W.G. Murray, 'Report re Fred Brooks, deceased, ... ' 2/9/28; Inquest into the death of 17 aborigines, 13/1/29, in File of Papers; Northern Standard 9/11/28; N.T. Times, 9/11/28.
20. Proceedings pp. 42, 50, 51; W.G. Murray, ibid.
21. Deposition of W.G. Murray before E. Allchurch, S.M. (see footnote 16, above.)
22. Proceedings, p. 51.
23. ibid., pp. 43, 51. On the next day Stafford went down the Lander to see if there were any natives at White Stone. He says he found none - Proceedings p. 44; Inquest into the death of 17 aborigines (loc. cit.) deposition (13/1/29) of R.B. Stafford.

24. Proceedings pp. 43, 46, 51, 52.
25. See Proceedings pp. 43, 46-7, 51; and the sources indicated in footnote 19 (above.). The exact dates of most of the encounters is unknown. No witness was able to be precise about them; but they can be roughly calculated from the number of times witnesses said 'After camping.....' or 'The next morning.....' .
26. Proceedings pp. 47, 52 and sources indicated in footnote 19 (above).
27. W.G. Murray, 'Report re Fred Brooks, deceased... ' 2/9/28, in File of Papers.
28. Proceedings, pp. 47, 53 and sources indicated in footnote 19 (above).
29. Proceedings pp. 44, 47, 53, 13; Inquest into the death of 17 aborigines (loc. cit.); deposition of W.G. Murray before E. Allchurch, S.M. (n.d. - see footnote 16, above).
30. Proceedings p. 53 and Exhibit 13.
31. W. G. Murray, 'Report re Fred Brooks, deceased.....' 2/9/28, in File of Papers.
32. See ibid; Proceedings pp. 50 - 53, 56.
33. ibid, Exhibit 9.
34. M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, *passim*, especially pp. 244-5, 229; Cawood to Clemens, 22/11/28, in File of Papers; Proceedings p. 59-60.
35. Govres to Hometer, 4/9/28; Cawood to Clemens, 4/9/28, in File of Papers.
36. ibid; Proceedings, Exhibit 13.
37. Hometer to Govres, 3/9/28; Govres to Hometer, 4/9/28, in File of Papers.
38. Register 11/9/28.
39. Proceedings, Exhibit 13; cf. Advertiser, 13/9/28.
40. M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 145.
41. Proceedings, p. 62 (paraphrased - not reproduced - in D. Lockwood, Fair Dinkum, London, 1960, pp. 85 - 86); W. Horton, 'Report of an attack by Blacks on me with intent to murder, etc.,' 30/8/28; Inquest into the

41. death of Walgardu, deposition of W. Morton, 19/1/29, in File of Papers; J. Hamlyn, Letter to the author, 7/4/60.
42. Proceedings, Exhibit 13 and p. 54; Goyres to Hometer 8/9/28 in File of Papers.
43. Proceedings, Exhibit 8; W. G. Murray, Report (19/10/28) to the Commissioner of Police; Inquest into the death of Wangaridge, 12/1/29, in File of Papers.
44. W.G. Murray, Interview with the author, 12/4/60; J. Hamlyn, Letter to the author, 7/4/60.
45. Proceedings, pp. 53, 62.
46. E. Hill in Sunday Sun and Guardian (Sydney), 5/2/33; confirmed by Murray in an interview with the author, 12/4/60.
47. For the only first-hand accounts of this and the following two encounters see Proceedings pp. 53-55, 62-64; W.G. Murray, Report re 'Attack on W. Morton by Natives,' 19/10/28; Inquest (by V. C. Carrington) into the death of 14 aborigines of the Walmulla tribe, 19/1/29, in File of Papers.
48. Proceedings, pp. 53-4, 63; and see footnote 47 (above).
49. Proceedings, p. 64; W.G. Murray, ibid; re-asserted by Murray in an interview with the author, 12/4/60.
50. For Encounter 3B see Proceedings pp. 54, 63; and footnote 47 (above)
51. Proceedings pp. 53-4, 56-7; see File of Papers for the report.
52. Fluid is sometimes let, by the insertion of a knife from the knee of an unmanageable steer in order to 'hobble' it.
53. Advertiser 18/10/28.
54. Proceedings, Exhibit 12.
55. Proceedings p. 60, Exhibits 3, 4 & 5; Advertiser 18/12/28.
56. Register 6/2/29.
57. Rev. W. Morley (Secretary of A.P.N.R.) to Abbott, 14/5/29 in File of Papers; CPD, vol. 120 (1929) p. 845.

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58. Sunday Sun and Guardian (Sydney) 5/2/33; G.T. Madigan,  
Central Australia, p. 238-9. Murray has photographs  
and press-cuttings in connexion with this drama.
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Chapter 3.

WHITE MAN'S BEDOURIE<sup>(1)</sup>.

Protector Murray brought an 'Information and Complaint for an Indictable Offence' against Padygar and Akirkra on September 7th, 1928, in Alice Springs, in that they 'did Feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did kill and murder one Frederick Brooks.....' (sic)<sup>(2)</sup>. Mr. E. Allchurch, Special Magistrate, Clerk of the Court on this occasion, manager of the telegraph station, a Central Australian resident for many years and a staunch South Australian<sup>(3)</sup>, adjourned the case for hearing before himself on 15/9/1928. Sergeant Noblet was directed to commit the prisoners to gaol where they were kept in neck-chains by the 'Old Timer'<sup>(4)</sup>.

When the hearing took place on the 15th Murray himself conducted the proceedings<sup>(5)</sup>. He was also the principal witness, Lala being the only other one. Alick Wilson acted as interpreter, probably because he was the only man available who could speak the Walpari 'lingo'. After Lala, who stated that he saw Padygar and Akirkra kill Brooks, and Murray had given their evidence and made their depositions<sup>(6)</sup>, and after Padygar and Akirkra had admitted under cross-examination that they had helped to kill Brooks<sup>(7)</sup>, Allchurch committed them for sentence under the South Australian Justices Act of 1921 to the next session of the Supreme Court of Central Australia - the examination of all witnesses 'having been completed' and 'the defendants thereupon pleads guilty'<sup>(8)</sup>. In doing so he made more than grammatical mistakes: the South Australian Justices Act was no longer in force in Central Australia<sup>(9)</sup>, and Padygar and Akirkra were allowed to plead guilty although the Aboriginals Ordinance of 1918 expressly





### CENTRAL AUSTRALIA MURDER.

The two aborigines who were found not guilty on a charge of having murdered Mr. F. Brooks, near Alice Springs. A protest against the killing of 17 aborigines by the police during their effort to arrest the alleged murderers has been lodged with the Home and Territories Department by the Rev. Athol McGregor, of the Methodist Inland Mission.

*Plate 7*

*From Adelaide Register 10-11-28*

forbade it<sup>(10)</sup>. Yet he was not altogether to blame: he was part of the Special Magistrate System: no person in Central Australia had any legal training<sup>(11)</sup>. The same court sentenced the two natives Murray had brought back from Pine Hill on September 13th, to gaol for six months<sup>(12)</sup>.

Padygar and Akirkra whiled their time away in gaol until Murray left with them and Lala late in October for Darwin and the Supreme Court. Murray must have set out confident that he would obtain a conviction or else completely despairing of it,<sup>for</sup> the only witness he took with him was Lala. An attempt had been made to obtain a statement from Chapman, but it was too late: he was already delirious<sup>(13)</sup>. However, the trackers and Skipper and Dodger could, if the white members of the first police party are to be believed, have furnished damning evidence as to the identification of the prisoners and their implication in the murder, for the tracking of the owners of the pads leading away from the scene of the crime had been one of the principal means of identification. But perhaps Murray did not want the trackers to talk too much<sup>(14)</sup>.

The case had at first been gazetted to open on September 26th<sup>(15)</sup>, but was finally heard only on November 7th and 8th<sup>(16)</sup>. R. I. D. Mallam, recently promoted, was the presiding Judge. As a barrister he had never lost a case, having defended at least twenty people on a charge of murder during his eighteen years in Darwin<sup>(17)</sup>. Perhaps this influenced his decision: he reminds one of Judge Pondrosass in 'Capricornia', reversed. But there was no Caesar Bightit to come up from the South and

challenge him. Wilson was again the interpreter<sup>(18)</sup>.

November 7th was a hot day. The jury sweltered even after obtaining permission from His Honour to remove their coats. Mr. Asche, Crown Law Officer, acted for the prosecution, and Mr. Foster for the defence. The latter was equipped with a message from Bleakley that Miss Lock had been told by aborigines at Harding Soak that the police party had surrounded a camp and shot a number of aborigines, including women and children<sup>(19)</sup>. Lala was cross-examined and the court was adjourned for lunch at an exciting juncture half way through Murray's evidence -- just when the party was preparing for Encounter 3A.

But some of the jury preferred comfort to excitement. Two of them stole home for lunch. When the Court re-assembled His Honour reprimanded the Sheriff for not knowing the difference between ten and twelve and adjourned the case until the next day.

On November 8th a new jury was sworn in and supplied with a resumé of evidence already given. Lala was again questioned and when his evidence was compared with that of the previous day the discerning eyes of Mr. Foster spotted inconsistencies: Padygar was his uncle, for example, on November 7th and no relation at all on the 8th. Mr. Foster had probably realized that Lala would contradict himself when he expressed the opinion that the hearing could not continue after the disappearance of the two jurors. Mr. Asche, of course, argued in the other direction.

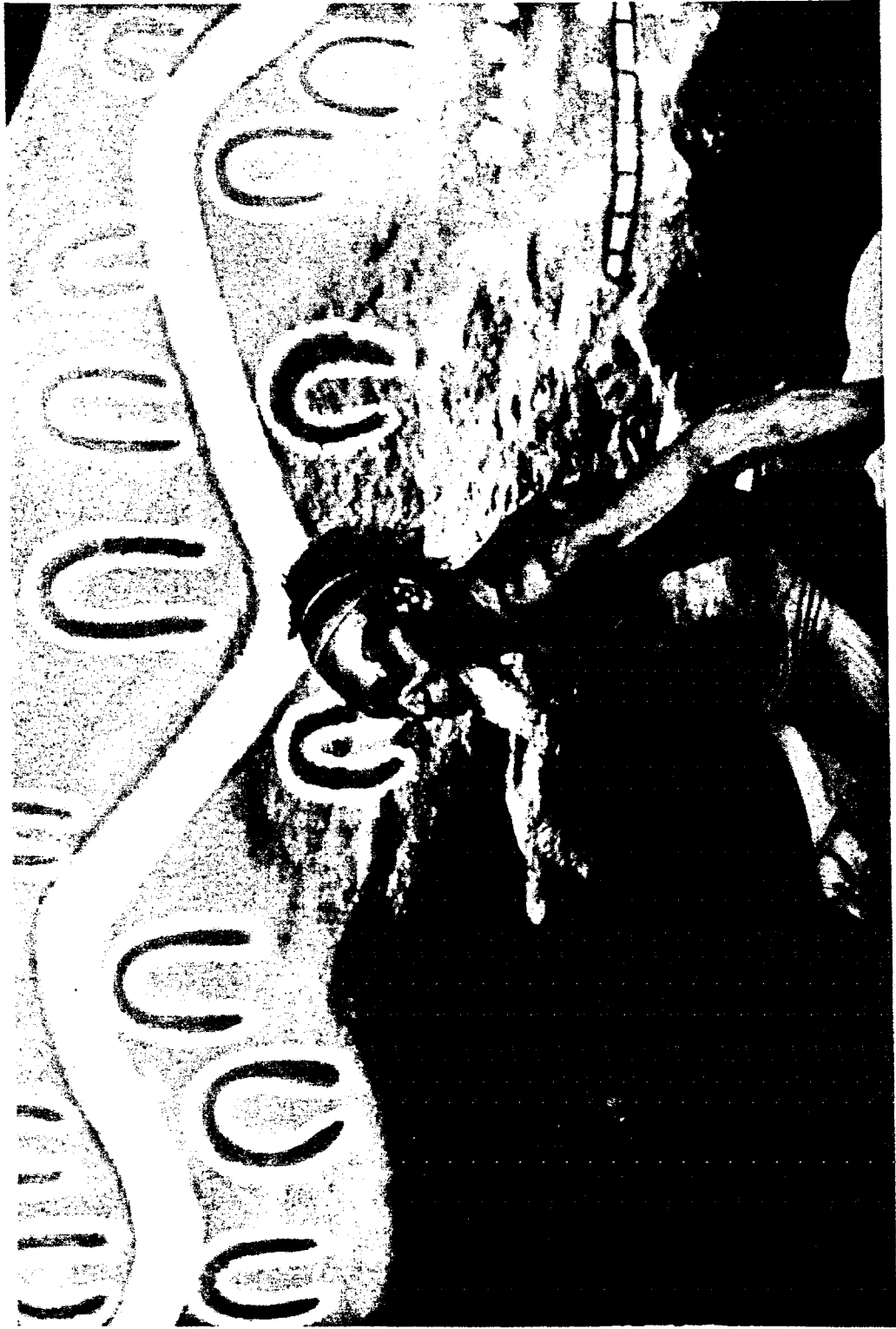
Murray was surprisingly forthright. He admitted that seventeen aborigines had been killed while his party was endeavouring to arrest the murderers of Brooks and even

had to be halted once for going into unnecessary details; and that his party had shot to kill: 'What was the use of a wounded black fellow hundreds of miles away from civilization?'

By this time the case was as good as decided in Padygar's and Akirkra's favour. But Mallam interrupted Murray's evidence to deliver a long address to the jury, pointing out that evidence taken from Padygar and Akirkra before their arrival in Darwin, evidence in the Court below and evidence in the form of things shown was not admissable. No attempt had been made to send evidence in the proper manner from the Court in Alice Springs: Judge Mallam had received 'a dreadfully improper document' from Allchurch, taken under the South Australian Justices Act of 1921 and a covering letter which he refused to read. The defendants had made statements to Murray's trackers but as they were not present such evidence was dubitable because it was second-hand; Murray had not cautioned the prisoners; the evidence was not really voluntary, supplied as it was by natives under arrest; and the prisoners should not have been allowed to plead guilty in Alice Springs.

Murray then continued his evidence and concluded it by describing how one bullet had killed 'two abos'. Whereupon the Judge remarked 'Mowed them down whole sale', and the jury retired, bringing back a verdict of 'Not Guilty' after 15 (or 45) minutes<sup>(20)</sup>. Had the case been heard 1,000 miles south among Centralian settler solidarity the verdict would very probably have been quite different<sup>(21)</sup>

Padygar and Akirkra left Darwin by train on November 13th with Constable Murray, whose duty it was to return



From Deep, B. and Carell, V.  
Dust for the Dancers, 1955, facing 101

BULLFROG

Plate 8

them to their own country. After leaving the train and camping for the night at War Lock waterhole, Murray woke up on the morning of the 14th to find that his two charges had disappeared<sup>(22)</sup>. They later turned up at Mataranka, and partly, if not wholly, owing to the representations of societies interested in the aborigines, were supplied with the means of returning to the Walpari country<sup>(23)</sup>. Both spent their last days at Yuendumu Native Settlement, Padygar dying there some ten years ago and Akirkra in 1959<sup>(24)</sup>. The latter, under the illustrations pseudonym of 'Bullfrog', achieved considerable fame. A photograph of Bullfrog in Dreamtime decorates the pages of at least one anthropological work<sup>(25)</sup>.

The revelations concerning police methods and actions at Darwin greatly stimulated a movement already feebly afoot to have an independent inquiry made into the shootings by Murray's two parties. The setting up of a 'Board of Enquiry'<sup>(26)</sup> to inquire into 'the killing of natives in Central Australia by Police Parties and others, and concerning other matters' is the story of direct pressure brought to bear upon the Federal Government by missionary and other societies, strongly, though cautiously at first, supported by the southern Press.

The Press learnt on September 11th, in spite of the Government, that seventeen natives had been shot by the first police party<sup>(27)</sup>. The actions of both parties were publicized overseas and it was sensitive to this<sup>(28)</sup>. The London 'Times' of September 8th reported 'serious native uprisings'. Cattle killing continued to be reported<sup>(29)</sup>, and statements by clergyman like Rev. J. Needham criticizing

the Government and deploring the callous treatment of aborigines, appeared<sup>(30)</sup>. But still the Press was cautious: a motion passed by the convention of the Australian Labour Party in September, criticizing the Government for not taking immediate action instead of appointing Bleakley, nowhere appeared in its pages<sup>(31)</sup>.

Meanwhile the Department of Home and Territories was being caused not a little concern. An election was in the offing and it could not afford to blunder seriously<sup>(32)</sup>. A number of requests for information, two by Government members, had already been received before the Darwin trial<sup>(33)</sup> and on October 24th the South Australian Premier promised his Parliament that he would see whether he could do anything to mitigate the sentence of the twelve natives who had broken into the Glen Helen Store<sup>(34)</sup>. The Department of Home and Territories was hard beset, chiefly because it knew so little. By the time of the Darwin trial the only information it had concerning the killings was the two reports of Murray, the second of which did not list the fatalities, and a few belated comments by Cawood<sup>(35)</sup>. When it heard that the Crown had lost at Darwin it was aghast and sent a coded telegram to Cawood asking for information<sup>(36)</sup>. Fortunately for it, there had been time only for one question<sup>(37)</sup> concerning the killings to be asked in the House before the First Session of the Tenth Parliament ended on September 22nd.

The southern and northern papers of November 9th carried the story of the Darwin trial and also of a number of protests about it. Rev. A. McGregor, a Methodist Missionary newly arrived in the Northern Territory and just back in Katherine from a trip to the Centre, viciously

criticized the shocking way in which justice had been administered to the Walpari as revealed at the trial<sup>(38)</sup>. On the same day he sent a telegram of protest to the Department of Home and Territories, asking for an inquiry.<sup>(39)</sup> Burton, Secretary of the Presbyterian General Assembly, did likewise<sup>(40)</sup>. And W. J. Clemens, Secretary of the Department of Home and Territories, sent a despatch to Cawood reprimanding him for his failure to supply sufficient information and comments on the police reports he had forwarded, and declaring, inter alia, that his Department was 'at a loss to understand' the 'sudden' outburst of trouble with the natives. He also hinted that an inquiry might have to be made<sup>(41)</sup>.

On November 11th a Methodist Minister in Darwin, Rev. S. Jarvis, delivered a tirade about the Darwin trial from the pulpit, and the southern papers of the 13th declared that Darwin, hardy Darwin, was shocked by the revelations, also reporting a 'general denunciation' of the action the police had taken<sup>(42)</sup>. The Methodist Inland Mission had written to the Department of Home and Territories on the previous day supporting McGregor's request<sup>(43)</sup>. The Department began fishing for likely investigators. On November 13th Clemens wrote to the Public Service Inspector of South Australia asking him to recommend a reputable and experienced South Australian citizen<sup>(44)</sup>. On the same day Rev. W. Morley, Secretary of the Association for the Protection of Native Races, despatched a letter to the Prime Minister (Bruce) supporting a telegram sent on the 12th asking for a representative on the Commission of Inquiry, if set up; and on the following day he sent another letter to Bruce, pointing out the power and history



of his Association and the fact that the Leader of the Opposition in his policy speech had promised to inaugurate a policy along lines favoured by it, and demanding an inquiry and a clear declaration of the policy of the Government towards the aborigines<sup>(45)</sup>. Bruce thereupon gave a public assurance that the matter would be 'sifted to the bottom'<sup>(46)</sup>.

But demands for an inquiry were still sent in: by the Women's Non-Party Association of South Australia on the 16th; The Australian Council of Churches on the 17th; the World Peace Department of the Theosophical Order of Service on the 20th; and the Australian Aborigines' Mission two days later<sup>(47)</sup>. The Kimberley atrocities again became a topical subject among correspondents to the Press and one enthusiastic citizen wrote to the Prime Minister declaring that he could clear all concerned in the shootings<sup>(48)</sup>. At last on November 28th the Government decided on an Independent Inquiry and made its decision public two days later<sup>(49)</sup>. The Church, missionary and anthropological societies, supported by a Press not backward to publish their protests and having utilized a few lucky levers such as the oncoming elections and the acquittal of Padygar and Akirkra, which had rendered the seventeen shot technically innocent, had won the day.

However, there was still the morrow to be concerned for: the personnel and terms of reference of the Inquiry had yet to be decided on. From the outset various societies had insisted that the scope of any inquiry should be very broad, broad enough to include an investigation into the conditions of the aborigines in Central Australia and recommendations as to future policy; and that the personnel should be representative of all interested parties.

This time, however, the Government was firm. In insisting on narrow terms of reference it repeatedly referred to the broad scope of the inquiry being conducted by Bleakley, whose report, fortunately for it, had not come in when expected and was due in a few months time<sup>(50)</sup>. McGregor had asked for 'a full inquiry' and Burton for 'the fullest inquiry'<sup>(51)</sup>; but the Methodist Inland Mission on November 12th demanded more than an inquiry into the shootings: 'We trust that the scope of the inquiry will be broad with a view to the framing of some national policy that will be satisfactory to all sections of the community'<sup>(52)</sup>. Bruce countered this with his vague assurance that the matter would be 'sifted to the bottom'. A few more demands for a broad inquiry were made: by, for example, the Victorian Council of Churches and the Association for the Protection of Native Races<sup>(53)</sup>. But most associations were content to press for an inquiry only into the actual shootings. Nobody who could be called a Northener pressed for anything. H. Nelson early in December swept the polls and was returned as the representative of the Northern Territory in the House of Representatives on a platform of forty-three planks, not one of which was concerned with the aborigines<sup>(54)</sup>.

On December 12th, therefore, J. A. C(arrodus) of the Department of Home Affairs<sup>(55)</sup> felt free to suggest the following narrow terms of reference: an inquiry was to be made as to whether the shooting of the seventeen and of the fourteen aborigines by the police parties and of Wangaridge by Tilmouth was justified and into 'Any other matters which, in the opinion of the tribunal, have relation to the foregoing or which might indicate the

reasons for the recent attacks by aborigines on white men in Central Australia'<sup>(56)</sup>. On the following day Clemens altered the last paragraph to 'Whether on the part of the settlers in the districts concerned, or in any other direction, any provocation had been given which could reasonably account for the recent depredations by the aborigines and their attacks on white men in Central Australia. If not, what, in the opinion of the tribunal, were the reasons for the aborigines' actions?'<sup>(57)</sup> thus conceding a little to those who demanded an inquiry of wide scope. No further alterations, except in insignificant detail, were made to these instructions.

On December 13th the Board of Enquiry was officially appointed by the Governor-General, and a special Board of Enquiry Ordinance had been drawn up by the Attorney-General's Department after the Inquiry had been decided on: it had suddenly dawned on Clemens that there was no law in force in Central Australia which would allow such a Board to function<sup>(59)</sup>. It gave the Governor-General power to appoint Boards of Enquiry in Central Australia and the Board the power to examine witnesses upon oath or affirmation and to summon any person and any evidence it desired; and provided for a penalty of twelve months imprisonment for anyone who knowingly gave false testimony.

The Board had the power to 'sift the matter to the bottom' if it wanted to.

There was a much bitterer struggle with the Government over the personnel of the Board. The Association for the Protection of Native Races led the attack. Already on November 12th it asked for a representative on any Commission that might be appointed and received an



**WHITE MAN'S JUSTICE:** The three members of the commission who are now enquiring into the shooting of blacks in Central Australia. From left: Inspector Giles, Mr. A. H. O'Kelly (chairman), and Mr. J. Q. Cawood. A photograph by The Register's special representative.

*From Adelaide Register 15.1.29*

Plate 9

assurance some days later that its request would be taken into consideration<sup>(60)</sup>. On the 15th the South Australian Public Service Inspector replied to Clemens' letter of the 13th, suggesting Police Inspector P. A. Giles of Oodnadatta, who had had much experience among aborigines, as a suitable person to undertake inquiries. He feared 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 "white washing" the Police Force', but nevertheless thought that experience was the most important requirement<sup>(61)</sup>. But Clemens already had Giles in mind: on the 13th he had suggested to Howse that Giles be a member of the commission; and J. H. Edgar, the Tibetan missionary who had recently been so outspoken in condemning the Central Australian aborigines, was his second choice<sup>(62)</sup>. Obviously the Government was taking no chances in choosing the personnel.

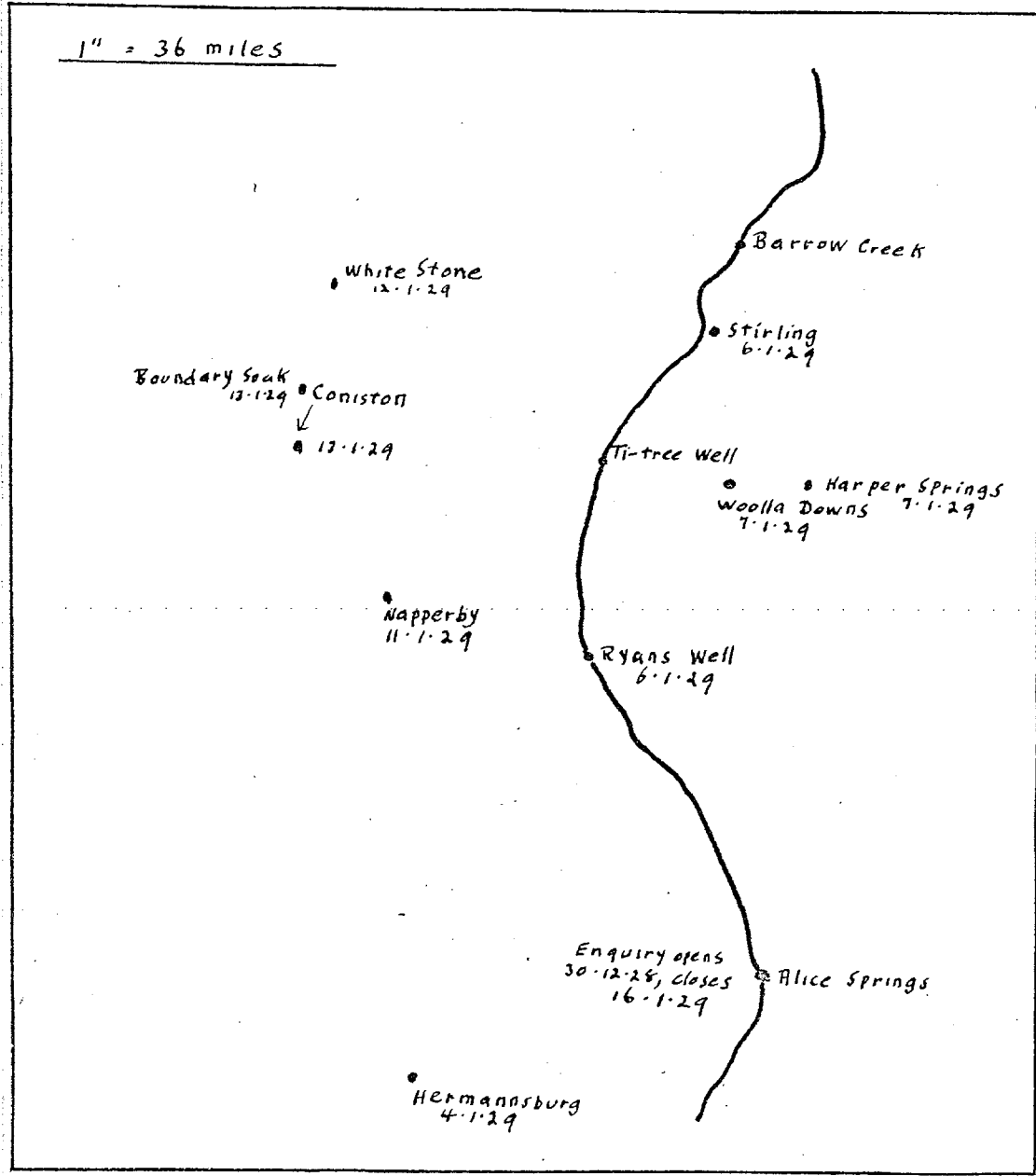
On November 27th Bruce solicited the Queensland Premier for the services of A.H. O'Kelly, Police Magistrate at Cairns, and a few days later that officer was appointed Chairman of the Board<sup>(63)</sup>. The requests of the associations were not receiving much consideration. Cawood telegraphed the Department of Home Affairs on December 1st suggesting that if there was to be a mission representative it should be E. Kramer, a missionary of the Aborigines' Friends' Association in Central Australia, who was well-disposed to the Administration<sup>(64)</sup>. The complete personnel was announced on December 4th: O'Kelly, Giles and Cawood himself<sup>(65)</sup>.

There was an immediate storm of protest, again headed by the Association for the Protection of Native Races.

This association was to challenge the Government's actions to the bitter end<sup>(66)</sup>. On December 6th Bruce summarily announced that he would not consider the protests<sup>(67)</sup>. He had conveniently forgotten his promise to consider the appointment of a representative of the Association for the Protection of Native Races.

When the full details concerning the personnel and terms of reference appeared in the Press on December 20th, more criticisms were made, especially by Dr. Basedow of the Aborigines' Protection League<sup>(68)</sup>. On the same day Giles rather indiscreetly indicated his bias by pointing out how unreliable accounts of the conditions of aborigines in Central Australia were<sup>(69)</sup>. No-one outside officialdom knew that Cawood's Secretary, Carrington, who was not even qualified<sup>(70)</sup> to take shorthand notes, was to act as Secretary to the Board. One wonders whether O'Kelly was not given instructions, in addition to the terms of reference, in Canberra, whither he was specifically summoned before going on to Adelaide and Alice Springs<sup>(71)</sup>. He later made a 'confidential report'<sup>(72)</sup> which has never been made public. He was no doubt instructed to do so. The Board of Enquiry seemed designed to 'white-wash' the actions of the police and settlers. And that is exactly what it set out to do.

O'Kelly and Giles arrived in Alice Springs with a typewriter for Carrington and camping gear, after being met by Cawood at Rumbalara, the northern-most point of the railway under construction, on December 29th<sup>(73)</sup>. The Board of Enquiry was declared open on the following day and evidence taken from one witness. It is almost unbelievable, but true, that Murray was allowed to be present at all of



Map Showing the Movements of the Board of Enquiry

the sittings and Kramer at most of them<sup>(74)</sup>. Murray was allowed to ask questions and when he intimated that he did not desire the presence of Alick Wilson, who was ill in Darwin, the Board dispensed with Wilson's evidence<sup>(75)</sup>.

It had been anticipated by the Department of Home Affairs that the inquiry would take from two to three months to complete. But after travelling 1,500 miles by car over rough roads or no roads at all and examining thirty witnesses at nine different places<sup>(76)</sup>, the Board completed its hearings on 16/1/1929 and despatched its Finding to the Department of Home Affairs on the 18th<sup>(77)</sup>. Thus only eighteen days were spent making investigations and one in arriving at and setting down conclusions. And while the Board was in session its Secretary held belated inquests into the deaths of the seventeen aborigines and of Wangaridge<sup>(78)</sup>. It is not too severe a criticism to say that the inquiry was a bit of hurry-up<sup>(79)</sup>. O'Kelly had telegraphed the Department of Home Affairs already on January 6th, eight days after the Inquiry had been declared open, that he would have the report ready by January 30th<sup>(80)</sup>.

Thirty witnesses in all, if one counts Carrington's inquest into the death of Wangaridge - the Board counted it<sup>(81)</sup> - were examined, and a number of exhibits produced. Strangely enough the depositions at the Alice Springs hearing were not among the latter, possibly because of the severe remarks of Mallam, while comparatively irrelevant details, such as the depositions made at the inquest into the death of Henty and the police report concerning an attack by blacks on a blacktracker at Arltunga, were<sup>(82)</sup>.

An analysis of the witnesses shows that the only native evidence produced was that of 'Police' Paddy who



later became notorious<sup>(83)</sup> for alleged shooting of aborigines. The evidence of Major, who was said to have 'identified' all killed in the first four encounters, was dispensed with as he had gone 'bush'<sup>(84)</sup>. And Dodger was not called on because he, on the evidence of the white members of the party, had been with the pack-horses in the rear all the time<sup>(85)</sup>. To take evidence from relatives of the natives killed did not even occur to the Board. This compares very unfavourably with the Wood Royal Commission which examined fifteen aborigines and nineteen whites,<sup>(86)</sup> and with inquiries concerning the native peoples of New Guinea and elsewhere<sup>(87)</sup>, and indicates that the well known difficulty of obtaining reliable native evidence was not the only factor which caused the Board to dispense with it.

Seventeen of the thirty represented pastoral interests: eleven of these were directly engaged in the pastoral industry; the rest were managers, wives, drovers and station hands. Four of the thirty were missionaries, and seven were representatives of the Administration, including three policemen (if Paddy be counted). Of the thirty only three had had less than five years experience with the blacks, two of them being missionaries McGregor and Lock: so that most of the people the Board questioned had had their opinion of the aborigines lowered through contact and were not willing to give evidence against one another. This is evident alone from the fact that McGregor and Lock were the only witnesses to give evidence and express opinions radically different from that of the other twenty eight<sup>(88)</sup>.

It is not surprising, then, that it took so short a time for the Board to reach its conclusions.. It stated that the shooting of the seventeen, of the fourteen and of

Wangaridge was justified; that the police parties were not punitive expeditions; that no provocation had been given which could reasonably account for the depredations by the aborigines and their attacks on white men; and that the aborigines acted as they did because the Wallmulla<sup>(89)</sup> Tribe had come over from the Western Australian border on a marauding expedition; because of the bad influence of unattached missionaries, inexperienced settlers and semi-civilized natives on myalls; because semi-civilized natives tend to lose their hunting skill while bludging on the working boys at the stations and a woman missionary living amongst some of them had lowered their respect for whites; because aboriginal crimes often went unpunished, there were insufficient police and imprisonment was not, in any case, a deterrent to the offenders; and because escaped prisoners from Darwin wandered about causing unrest and preaching revolt against the whites. In conclusion it found that there was no starvation among the natives of Central Australia, there being ample food and water for them<sup>(90)</sup>.

The people of Central Australia are still proud of their 'Royal Commission'<sup>(91)</sup>.

Chapter 3.            WHITE MAN'S BEDOURIE.            REFERENCES.

1. Arabic word meaning dense dust-storm lasting for days and enveloping everything.
2. Mistakes like this were made in the two depositions, the committal and the warrant, and reflect ill upon the judicial system of Central Australia in 1928. See File of Papers for all papers relating to the trial in Alice Springs.
3. Northern Standard, 17/2/28; and ibid, 9/11/28; N.T. Times, 9/11/28.
4. See photograph facing p.32 and cf. Chapter I, footnote 62 and text (above).
5. N.T. Times 9/11/28; Northern Standard 9/11/28.
6. See File of Papers; N.T. Times 18/9/28; Advertiser 17/9/28.
7. N.T. Times, Advertiser, ibid.
8. File of Papers, 'Committal for Sentence,' 15/9/28.
9. N.T. Times, 9/11/28; Northern Standard, 9/11/28.
10. s. 58 (loc. cit.); cf. Mallam in N.T. Times 9/11/28, Northern Standard, 9/11/28.
11. cf. F. E. Baume, Tragedy Track, p. 39.
12. Advertiser 17/9/28.
13. Proceedings, p. 60 (evidence of Sgt. Noblet).
14. cf. Finding of the Board of Enquiry, p.1; Proceedings pp. 40, 44, 45, 55; N.T. Times 9/11/28; Northern Standard, 9/11/28.
15. Government Gazette, 21/9/28.
16. The only printed records of the Darwin trial are newspaper reports: the records of the Court were destroyed during World War II. However, the two Darwin papers, especially the Northern Standard, gave full and fairly reliable reports of the case. Except as otherwise indicated, what is here written on the Darwin trial is based on information contained in Northern Standard, 9/11/28 and N.T. Times, 9/11/28.

17. Northern Standard, 18/5/28.
18. He probably accompanied Murray to Darwin.
19. Bleakley to Hometer, 15/10/28, in File of Papers.
20. Northern Standard reports that the jury retired for 15 minutes., N.T. Times for 45 minutes.
21. cf. the way in which the residents of Central Australia met the inquiries of the Board of Enquiry (below, footnote 88 and text) and G.T. Wood, Report of Royal Commission (loc. cit.) p. vi.
22. W.G. Murray, Report 're Discharged Prisoners, Padygar and Akirkra', 22/11/28, in File of Papers; Advertiser 23/11/28.
23. Blanche Stephens (Secretary of W.M.P.A.), Letter to Howse, 16/11/28 in File of Papers; Aborigines' Friends' Association, Annual Report (1928), p. 10.
24. Rev. T. Fleming, Letter to the author, 13/5/60.
25. B. Dean and V. Carell, Dust for the Dancers, facing p. 54 (reproduced Chapter V, facing p. 73 below)
26. The word is spelt thus in the original document; wherever it is not used in connexion with the Board I prefer and use 'inquiry'. For full title see Bibliography I(a).
27. Register 11/9/28; cf. Chapter II, footnote 38 and text (above).
28. cf. Chapter I, footnote 98 and text (above).
29. Advertiser, 18/10/28; Register, 12/9/28, 8/9/28.
30. Sydney Morning Herald 19/9/28.
31. As far as I can ascertain. It appeared, however, in London Times, 14/9/28.
32. cf. W.L. Parsons to Howse, 31/10/28 in File of Papers; Chapter V, footnote 77 and text (below).
33. See File of Papers, especially memorandum, 26/11/28, listing 'Associations and persons ... who have written to the Department regarding shooting of aborigines in Central Australia.'
34. Register 25/10/28.

35. cf. Clemens to Howse 13/11/28; memorandum by J.A. C(arrodus), 19/11/28; 'Notes made by the Home Department. A summing up of the position,' 23/11/28, in File of Papers.
36. Hometer to Gowres, 9/11/28, in File of Papers.
37. CPD vol. 119, 6607 (12/9/28).
38. Register 9/11/28; Argus 10/11/28; N.T. Times 9/11/28, 13/11/28; cf. Proceedings, Exhibit 7 and p. 38; D. Lockwood, Fair Dinkum, p. 84.
39. In File of Papers.
40. ibid (9/11/28).
41. Clemens to Gawood 9/11/28 in ibid.
42. E.g., Sydney Morning Herald, 13/11/28; Register, 13/11/28; and see Advertiser 12/11/28; N.T. Times, 13/11/28.
43. T.C. Rentoul to Clemens, 12/11/28, in File of Papers.
44. See File of Papers.
45. ibid; and see Sydney Morning Herald, 14/11/28.
46. ibid, 15/11/28; Argus, 15/11/28.
47. See File of Papers; Register, 17/11/28; Argus 17/11/28; Advertiser, 22/11/28.
48. Major Almond to Bruce, 27/11/28, in File of Papers.
49. Minute by J.A. C(arrodus), 28/11/28; Hometer to Gowres, 28/11/28 in ibid; Register, Argus and Sydney Morning Herald, 30/11/28.
50. CPD, vol. 119, p. 6536 (11/9/28); Register, 6/12/28, 24/1/29.
51. See footnotes 39 and 40 and text (above).
52. Above, footnote 43.
53. Morley to Bruce, 4/12/28; C.A. Judkins to Bruce, 30/11/28 in File of Papers.
54. Aborigines' Protection League, A Statement etc. (loc. cit.) p. 3; N.T. Times, 11/12/28.

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55. The name of the Department was changed in November.
  56. See File of Papers. It was as yet unknown to the Department that Norton had shot one native.
  57. ibid.
  58. No. 30 of 1928. See Proceedings, Exhibit I.
  59. Clemens to Bruce, 30/11/28, in File of Papers.
  60. Morley to Bruce, 12/11/28; Deane to Morley, 21/11/28 in ibid.
  61. G.E. Willson to Clemens, 15/11/28, in ibid.
  62. Clemens to Howse, 13/11/28, in ibid.
  63. Bruce to McCormack, 27/11/28; McCormack to Bruce, 28/11/28, in ibid.; Sydney Morning Herald, 30/11/28.
  64. Govres to Hometer (sic), 1/12/28, in File of Papers; and see Proceedings, p. 22-23.
  65. Sydney Morning Herald, Argus, 4/12/28.
  66. See File of Papers.
  67. Register, 6/12/28.
  68. Argus 21/12/28; London Times, 24/12/28.
  69. Advertiser 20/12/28.
  70. Govres to Hometer (sic), 13/12/28, in File of Papers.
  71. Minute by J.A. C(arrodus), 4/12/28, in ibid. It had been suggested (McCormack to Bruce, 1/12/28, in ibid.) that he fly to Alice Springs from Hughenden, presumably after travelling to Hughenden by train.
  72. The only (but sufficient and significant evidence for this) is a memorandum of Deane (by then Secretary of Home Affairs) to Cawood, 26/4/29, in ibid.
  73. Home Affairs to Govres, 17/12/28, in ibid.; Finding of the Board of Enquiry, p. 1.
  74. Proceedings, pp. 2, 4. Kramer was admitted to sessions of the Board on 31/12/28.
  75. ibid., p. 40.

76. Finding of the Board of Enquiry, p.1; Advertiser, 25/1/29. A representative of the Melbourne Herald accompanied the Board.
77. Proceedings, p. 59; Govres to Home Affairs, 18/1/29 in File of Papers. Lockwood (Fair Dinkum, p. 85) states that the Board sat for six months!
78. See the depositions and also Home Affairs to Govres, 22(?) /12/28, in File of Papers.
79. Hastily and hence poorly done job; 'slapdash'; cf. Bruce to McCormack, 28/11/28, in File of Papers.
80. See File of Papers; cf. Register 8/1/29.
81. Proceedings, p. 49 and Exhibit 8.
82. There were 13 Exhibits, included only in the original Proceedings, now in possession of the Department of Territories, Darwin.
83. Especially among natives. Rev. F.W. Albrecht, Letter to the author, 5/5/60; C.P. Mountford, Entry in diary, 19/6/42.
84. Finding of the Board of Enquiry, p. 1.
85. ibid.
86. Minutes and V & P of the Parl. of Western Aust.; No. 3. of 1927, p. xvi.
87. A.S. Canning, 'Allegations of Floggings and Forced Labour of Natives' - Report of Inquiry, CPP, 1923-4, IV, 1219 (of 86 witnesses 32 were natives); Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of the Territory of New Guinea, 1927-8, CPP 1929, II, 2747 (Comr. F.B. Phillips in an Inquiry (1927) examined 528 witnesses, 501 of whom were natives.)
88. Proceedings, passim; cf. News, 14/3/29.
89. Variously spelt in the evidence 'Wallmulla', 'Wallamulla', 'Walmala', 'Walmal,' 'Woollamulla'; cf. Chapter IV, footnote 113 and text (below).
90. See Finding of the Board of Enquiry.
91. This title was frequently given to the Board in letters by Centralians to the author; cf. M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 237.

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Chapter 4.

WHICH-WAY, BOSS? (1)

The reader has probably asked himself by now: Were the shootings really justified? What were the real causes of the depredations by natives? It is time to pause and attempt to answer these and other questions and to look at the native side of the story.

No real attempt has been made by a disinterested person to give a critical evaluation of the findings of the Board. Mrs. M. M. Bennett made some severe criticisms in 'The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being', 1930, but went to extremes, writing as she did in the heat of the affair. The only other books<sup>(2)</sup> to mention the subject at any length praise or at least condone the actions of the police parties and the findings of the Board. However, there was some criticism of the findings immediately after they were made public on January 30th, 1929<sup>(3)</sup>.

The Press, or at any rate the conservative Press, at first uncritically accepted them. But the conviction that they were correct could not have been very deep; for when a report<sup>(4)</sup> concerning the physical condition of the aborigines of Central Australia, substantiated by many photographs, was distributed in March, 1929, by Dr. W. Walker, a humane citizen of South Australia who had set out to create a public conscience in relation to the aborigines, the Press was at last aroused and carried biting editorial comments on the policy of the Government<sup>(5)</sup>. It never, however, openly attacked the findings as the more radical 'Smith's Weekly'<sup>(6)</sup> and 'Northern Standard'<sup>(7)</sup> did, though continual criticism forced isolated admissions such as

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'the police used more force than was needed'<sup>(8)</sup> out of it. Sometimes it even implicitly supported the findings by publishing articles like that in the Adelaide 'Register' of 6/2/1929, praising Murray who 'Rides Alone and Gets His Man Always'. And when Canon C. Lefroy published an article in the 'Contemporary Review' of February, 1929, critical of the Kimberley atrocities, it was generally condemned by the big dailies, especially as it had been written before the Finding was available<sup>(9)</sup>. The general attitude of the Press seemed to have been that though it would like to criticize the Finding it should refrain from doing so lest it embarrass the Government.

Before the findings appeared in the Press incidents in the North had kept public opinion and the various associations on their mettle. The manhunt for 'Willaberta Jack', the murder of Rencuf on the Daly River by blacks<sup>(10)</sup> and the attack on a black-tracker at Arltunga<sup>(11)</sup> were prominently publicized. And the 1929 census, which revealed to the public for the first time on January 30th<sup>(12)</sup> that full-bloods were holding their own and half-castes increasing, must have convinced many people that the aborigine and his problem were not dying out after all.

Soon after the verdict of the Board became known criticisms by the Australian Board of Missions, Dr. Basedow, and the Methodist Missionary Society of Australasia appeared in the Press<sup>(13)</sup>. On January 31st A. J. Vogan, author of 'Black Police', penned a letter entitled 'Killing No Murder' to the Department of Home Affairs<sup>(14)</sup>.

But it was not until the Association for the Protection of Native Races held a meeting in March that serious and detailed criticism began. This Association had been

furnished with a copy of the Finding and Proceedings of the Board<sup>(15)</sup>. On April 20th it forwarded a lengthy statement of the views of the meeting to Bruce. It resented the fact that the composition of the Board was 'entirely official' and that there was no legal representation for the natives - both in spite of requests made by the Association. It also complained that, though there was not sufficient evidence as to the identification of the aborigines, four separate shootings by a police party armed to the teeth should have taken place. And it inferred from the fact that Murray did not mention the number killed in his police reports and from a statement attributed to O'Kelly by the Adelaide 'Register' of 17/1/1929 to the effect that Murray hedged before the Board and was casual about the taking of thirty-one lives, that Murray was not candid at the Inquiry and perhaps concealed the number killed. O'Kelly's alleged statement did not appear in the typed copy of evidence produced before the Board: perhaps Carrington's typewriter was too slow for it and perhaps there was another reason. It also pointed out that Lock was the only unattached missionary in Central Australia, that the whole report did not tally with Mr. Bleakley's<sup>(16)</sup> and that the report said nothing about comboism though it was prevalent. In conclusion, it asked for further investigation<sup>(17)</sup>. When the statement reached Home Affairs, J. A. C(arrodus) minuted '....assumed no action'. It was answered on June 6th<sup>(18)</sup>.

Later in March a meeting of the Australian Board of Missions also criticized the Findings and sent a resolution to Bruce in April<sup>(19)</sup>. Bishop Le Fanu, upon returning from the meeting to Brisbane was particularly vociferous, praising the part played by the Association for the Protectio

of Native Races in getting the Board set up but deprecating the fact that the inquiry had not been shown to be 'absolutely above suspicion'<sup>(20)</sup>. The resolution stated that 'at least one representative of bodies representative of public interest in the case of the aborigines' should have been appointed to the Board of Enquiry, that a legal officer should have been engaged to assist the Board; that tracker Major, the most important witness, should have been questioned; that the evidence should have been made public and that the report brought itself under the implication of bias by alleging that unattached missionaries had a harmful influence while asserting that there had been no provocation by the settlers.

On April 11th and 12th the National Missionary Council met to discuss, inter alia, Bleakley's report with Abbott. Opinions similar to those expressed in the resolution of the Australian Board of Missions were put forward and a resolution pointing out - incorrectly - that no natives were shot by police in carrying out their duties during the twenty-year regime of Sergeant Stott and urging the police to employ more peaceful methods, was passed<sup>(21)</sup>. Rev. J. H. Sexton of the Aborigines' Friends' Association was the mover. At a meeting of the Presbyterian General Assembly of Victoria in May, similar views were expressed and a resolution passed and later forwarded to the Department of Home Affairs<sup>(22)</sup>.

After this the voice of the Association for the Protection of Native Races alone was heard in protest. On July 22nd its Secretary, Rev. W. Morley, wrote to Abbott stating that his Association regretfully accepted 'the altogether unsatisfactory findings'. But he was

not through yet: he changed front and demanded the removal of Murray<sup>(23)</sup>. This Abbott refused to do<sup>(24)</sup>. But the wily Morley wrote again demanding that Murray be removed for his own good and in the interests of black and white in Central Australia, but shifting part of his attack to the way in which the Alice Springs trial was conducted<sup>(25)</sup>. Abbott and the National Government did not stay in office long enough to answer this. When the new Minister for Home Affairs, A. Blakely, replied on 6/5/1930 it was too late for anything to be done in this direction<sup>(26)</sup>.

I have set down the history of the criticisms of the Board's findings not only because many of them were valid, but to demonstrate that it was mainly the associations interested in the welfare of aborigines, especially the church and mission societies, who spoke out on behalf of the ~~aborigines~~ ~~aborigines~~, and to record to what extent they were really prepared to go in <sup>their</sup> ~~the~~ interests, ~~of the aborigines~~. It has been demonstrated that the church and mission societies were by far the most vocal section of the Australian public in connexion with the Coniston killings. When they and their ideas of Christianizing and educating the natives are criticized, however validly, it should be remembered how great a part they played in sharpening a national conscience in Australia towards the aborigines<sup>(26a)</sup>.

But there are other valid criticisms than most of those already presented; and some of those presented need amplification. The Enquiry was so hasty that those conducting it had little time to see many of the discrepancies in



Randal Stafford (left) and desert myalls. *From F. E. Baume  
Tragedy Track, 1919*



Plate 10

Alice, Coniston Station.

*F. E. Baume, Tragedy Track,  
p 118*

the evidence even if they wanted to. It is very difficult to arrive at the truth in many particulars, however, as the whole affair has been distorted from the beginning partly by societies interested in it for its propaganda value but chiefly, it seems, by the Government as a matter of policy and by the settlers in their own interests. Nevertheless, after reading or hearing all available evidence, one is left with definite convictions on the important issues.

The most damning statement made in the Finding is that 'the Board is prepared to believe the evidence of all witnesses'<sup>(27)</sup>. This presumably applies only to the three 'reputable settlers'<sup>(28)</sup> mentioned, Stafford, Saxby and Briscoe, and to Murray himself, as the Board definitely was not prepared to believe some of the evidence given by McGregor, Lock and Heinrich<sup>(29)</sup>. At any rate, the statement is made directly after the Board records its suspicion that Saxby was not prepared to admit how many natives he had shot. Murray himself had said that there was something wrong if Saxby had not shot any, for he had shot to kill<sup>(30)</sup>. In any case both Saxby and Briscoe were employed by Stafford<sup>(31)</sup>. And Stafford and Saxby nowhere stated that they went after more natives on September 1st, as Terry has since asserted<sup>(32)</sup>. There is no evidence that the Board concerned itself to inquire into the repute of these witnesses. Murray had been cleared of some very grave charges in 1924<sup>(33)</sup>. Stafford, it is true, had a very high reputation among the settlers; but this is an indication that he, an unmarried man prepared illegally to employ an aboriginal female, might also have been prepared to act in their interests<sup>(34)</sup>.

The Finding also states that Paddy corroborated<sup>(35)</sup>

Murray's account, though Murray himself, in dispensing with the evidence of Wilson, said that it would probably be as unreliable as Paddy's had been<sup>(36)</sup>. Carrington's report<sup>(37)</sup> of Paddy's evidence is very confusing as well as being inaccurate in detail: Paddy says, for example, that he saw the body of Brooks<sup>(38)</sup>; and he does not mention until specifically asked, that Murray shot Woolingar<sup>(39)</sup>.

Concerning the shooting of the fourteen, Morton's evidence corroborates Murray's<sup>(40)</sup>. That was the most the Board could say as no more eye-witnesses were examined, though Wilson and the aborigine who accompanied the party could have been produced<sup>(41)</sup>. There is reason to doubt Morton's evidence, as we shall see later.

Were the various shootings 'justified', as the Board claimed? Much evidence points in the opposite direction - if one allows that the aborigine is the equal of the white man before the law.

First there is the question of identification and whether any innocent were shot. The Board stated that Major identified most of the natives in the first four shootings<sup>(42)</sup> and yet his evidence was dispensed with both before the Board and in Darwin. In any case, it was a foolish claim to make, for Major did not really identify any of the natives. He had not witnessed the murder of Brooks and could 'identify' only by following tracks for a very long way from the scene of the crime, some of which were a week old, or by asserting that Skipper and Dodger had told him that such and such an aborigine had helped to murder Brooks<sup>(43)</sup>.

Murray claims that, before setting out, he ascertained the names of twenty aborigines implicated in the murder of Brooks<sup>(44)</sup>. From whom he does not say; presumably it was from other members of the Walpari tribe, including Woolingar and Padygar. The only other evidence procured while the party was out was the alleged confession of some of the natives captured or shot - the two who slipped their handcuffs, for example; the 'volunteering' of information by other natives; and the fact that articles belonging to Brooks were found in a number of the camps<sup>(45)</sup>. However, a native never volunteers evidence against his kin<sup>(46)</sup>; it is still difficult for trusted persons to get the natives to talk about the Coniston killings; articles were found in a number of camps, but not in all; and who was to say which of the natives of such a camp were guilty? Besides, Dodger, not Major, is said to have identified Padygar and Woolingar<sup>(47)</sup> and none of the names mentioned before the Board coincide with twelve listed by Lala, the only available witness of the murder, in Darwin<sup>(48)</sup>.

The fact that there were very few wounded, none of whom survived<sup>(49)</sup>, indicates that the police parties engaged in ruthless and indiscriminate shootings in which some innocent were sure to suffer. Since the shootings, Walpari natives have told men like Strehlow, Mountford and Albrecht that a number of innocent were shot, sometimes including women and children<sup>(50)</sup>. The two lubras the police party admitted to shooting could not both have been guilty as only one lubra is mentioned in the official story<sup>(51)</sup> concerning the killing of Brooks.

In the case of the fourteen, the Board found that Morton had employed them all at various times and was able



to identify them as his attackers<sup>(52)</sup>. But Morton himself nowhere claims that he employed all of them. It is unbelievable that a man, suddenly attacked by about fourteen natives and dazed<sup>(53)</sup> after a few blows, should be able to recognize them over a month after the attack.

Nor is it altogether certain that only thirty-one were shot by the two parties. This number must be regarded as a minimum being the number given by Murray and other members of the party who had nothing to gain by admitting to the shooting of more. It is fairly certain, however, that only one each was shot by Tilmouth and Morton when attacked.

The Press reports indicate that at Darwin Murray admitted to the shooting of sixteen by the first party, omitting Encounter 2A<sup>(54)</sup>. The number given elsewhere for this encounter is six. This would mean that twenty-two were shot by the first party. The discrepancy may be due to faulty reporting. However, Murray visited more places than indicated in evidence produced before the Board<sup>(55)</sup> and neither he nor anyone else knows who shot the thirty-one and exactly when some of the encounters took place<sup>(56)</sup>. The shooting seems to have been disorderly and even out of hand.

Murray and Paddy were the only ones to admit before the Board that they shot any. All the others either did not know or denied that they had done so. Of the seventeen Murray admitted to shooting five<sup>(57)</sup>. This leaves eleven for Paddy and Wilson. Paddy admitted to shooting only one<sup>(58)</sup>; Wilson was not examined. Stafford did not indicate while giving evidence who shot the two lubras;

now he says that Paddy shot them both<sup>(59)</sup>. Of the fourteen Murray admitted to shooting only five<sup>(60)</sup>; neither he nor Morton knew who shot the rest.

Wilson, a member of both parties, was prosecuted, together with W. Braitling, in 1945 for allegedly assaulting an aborigine. He may have had a private score to settle in 1928<sup>(61)</sup> and so may have the others. Nobody knows; and the Board did not even attempt to know.

In view of all these discrepancies - and more could be mentioned - a more correct estimate of those shot seems to be the seventy reported in the Melbourne "Herald" of 20/11/1928, or the 105 Albrecht thinks were killed<sup>(62)</sup>. At any rate native evidence points to a greater number than thirty-one. Natives told the Cockatoo Creek Expedition in 1931<sup>(63)</sup>, Strehlow in 1932<sup>(64)</sup> and Mountford in 1942<sup>(65)</sup> that more than thirty-one were shot. Mountford was told that Padika (i.e. killer Paddy) strung up children 'all the same like nanny goats' - Miss Lock was told before the Board began its sittings that children had been shot<sup>(66)</sup> - and that Paddy went about cutting the throats of the wounded and clubbing them to death; and a Granites aborigine said that he had been forced to kill the wounded<sup>(67)</sup>. Undoubtedly some of the natives' stories have become distorted with the passage of time, but they cannot altogether be discounted when considering the report of an Enquiry that did not even give them a hearing.

In an interview<sup>(68)</sup> with the author Murray implied that if any innocent were shot they were shot in self-defence. This is the usual stand to take. The South African police recently claimed that they shot in self-defence at Sharpeville. It is significant that Murray's

(69) police reports nowhere claim that the shootings were in self-defence and hence justified. They were in the 'unfortunately-drastic-action-had-to-be-taken' and the 'shoot-or-let-go' vein. Yet when he came before the Board he claimed that his parties shot in self-defence on every occasion (70). In any case, the shooting of Woolingar when he swung a chain at Murray can hardly be called self-defence, and the shooting of two aborigines at a distance of 150 yards while running away definitely cannot (70a).

Nor were the natives repeatedly told to lay down their weapons on each occasion as the Finding asserts (71). There is no evidence that they were cautioned in Encounters 3A and 4A. And when they were cautioned by the first party it was sometimes, according to Murray, done by the trackers (72). Paddy, however, told the Board that he cautioned them in Aranda and that they could not understand him because they were 'Illparra' (i.e. Walpari) blacks (73).

No doubt the only alternative to shooting some of the alleged guilty ones was to allow them to escape (74). The police parties took the former course, a highly suspect one in the absence of definite identification.

One is forced to the conclusion that both parties were punitive expeditions intent on 'teaching the natives a lesson'. The Board discounted this on the grounds that many natives were allowed to go free, that the parties could have shot 100 if they wanted to, that Murray dismounted on

each occasion and tried to arrest the natives and that the  
wounded were tended to <sup>(75)</sup> .

No doubt the parties would have arrested the natives if they could have or if it was practical. No-one will deny them a little humanity. However, it was not practical to arrest them as they would probably have been acquitted by a white jury or condemned to death, only to have the sentence commuted. Padygar's and Akirkra's acquittal and the rarity of capital punishment for aborigines point to this <sup>(76)</sup> .

Nor was it possible to arrest them. Murray exclaimed on one occasion: 'It was useless to try to arrest these natives' <sup>(77)</sup> and Saxby 'You cannot arrest these myalls' <sup>(78)</sup>. Both of them were experienced bushmen and must have known that one cannot call upon an aborigine in the name of the King and expect him to heed, <sup>(79)</sup> and that the natives would look upon their party as a 'Kurdaitcha' <sup>(80)</sup>.

His orders, Murray claimed, were that there was to be no shooting as he wanted to make as many arrests as possible <sup>(81)</sup>. But in Darwin he claimed that not a shot would have been fired if the country was open; and also that Akirkra had no chance of getting away (at Encounter 4A) 'because the country was open' <sup>(82)</sup> .

Even if the party did not at first know that arrest was impossible they must have known after the first encounter, and yet they engaged in six more encounters with blacks whom they had deliberately tracked down.

Stafford has called Murray foolish for dismounting on each occasion, thus endangering himself <sup>(83)</sup>. This indicates that the civilian members of the parties, at any rate, preferred to stay in safety and shoot from their horses. Murray dismounted evidently to give at least some indication that he was trying to arrest the natives. By doing so he gave the other members of the party an opportunity to shoot to <sup>(84)</sup> save him.

There is, however, even more telling evidence that these were punitive expeditions. The Sergeant of Police at Alice Springs, in forwarding the report of Young and Carter, remarked concerning the restive aborigines: 'If some severe steps are not taken they will drive the Pastoralists out of the country.....' <sup>(85)</sup>. The same Sergeant, as Chief Protector of Aborigines, reporting on 8/12/1928 're natives killed by Police Party', stated: '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 white settlers in Central Australia. I deplore the killing of 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' <sup>(86)</sup>. And the Government Resident, also Commissioner of Police, while at Hermannsburg shortly before Brooks was killed remarked: 'The white people no longer feel safe, and I have received many complaints. It's time

something is done and I shall see that they are taught a lesson'.<sup>(87)</sup> Evidently the settlers put quite a bit of pressure on the Administration to organize the punitive expeditions.

There were other anomalies in police behaviour. The civilian members of the party were not even sworn in as special constables, (though some time after the Inquiry had <sup>closed</sup> ~~closed~~,<sup>(88)</sup> O'Kelly still believed they were ), presumably because a Coroner or a Justice of the Peace was required to do this and none were available without delay<sup>(89)</sup>. A. J. Vogan wrote to the Department of Home Affairs: 'The verdict of the Board means that anyone can now go on murdering aborigines with impunity'.<sup>(90)</sup> O'Kelly, in his confidential report, stated that if 'regular police' instead of 'special constables' had been used 'it was more than probable there would not have been the killing of blacks, at least not to the same extent.'<sup>(91)</sup> And no regulations about trackers existed. It was lawful for a constable to use a tracker to hunt down aborigines much as he would use a blood-hound; but it was not lawful for a tracker to shoot at least one aborigine, as Paddy did.<sup>(92)</sup> Nor was it lawful to capture witnesses and force them to tell where their fellows were.

Even if the shootings had been legally justified, they were quite inhumane. The aborigines of the Ti-tree Well area were frightened early in 1960 that, because of a monument recently erected on Central Mount Stuart and because of the

shooting of aborigines at Skull Creek in 1874, the white men would come down from Darwin and shoot them all <sup>(93)</sup>. So fear lingers in the mind of the natives. No concern was shown for the lubras and children of the men shot. A witness and two prisoners were taken thousands of miles through strange country, a terrifying experience for myalls <sup>(94)</sup>, and Woolingar was taken with the first party to show where the other natives were when suffering from a wound which caused his death shortly afterwards.

If, then, the actions of the police parties were unjust, were the attacks by the aborigines, which occasioned the punitive expeditions, justified? There is no justification in our law for killing or attacking, but in the black man's <sup>(95)</sup> there is. The Board found that no provocation had been given which could reasonably account for the actions of the blacks. But it did not search very hard.

To put the question differently; was Brooks just 'a <sup>(96)</sup> kindly old man who suffered in the clash of the frontier' or was there some other reason for his murder? Numerous and varying answers have been given. The natives almost invariably claim that he was killed for consorting with a lubra <sup>(97)</sup> and the whites for his rations or because he had seen his murderers kill a bullock and they were afraid that he would <sup>(98)</sup> tell Stafford. It is the native side of the story that we are interested in here.

Murray claimed that Padygar and Akirkra told him that they killed Brooks for his rations. (99) If they did, they were the only natives to say so, except for Lala. Relatives of natives shot told Strehlow in 1932 that they needed the country for game: (100) hence their actions. Others told Mountford in 1942 that Brooks was killed because he consorted with one lubra and then took another from the wrong marriage class - an act carrying the death penalty in native law. (101) In 1960 another native told him that Bullfrog killed Brooks after he had forcibly taken his (Bullfrog's) wife away for three days. (102)

It is significant that most of the native stories say that only one or two were implicated in the murder. In 1931 the Cockatoo Creek expedition was told the same story as Mountford heard in 1942. (103) A number of natives, including Djabangadi, a tribal son, though no relative, of Bullfrog, have recently told Rev. T. Fleming of Yuendumu that Brooks was killed by Bullfrog when he refused to give back his wife, whom he had taken, and to keep on supplying the rations he had been giving for her; or when Bullfrog went to his tent and found him consorting with his wife. (104) Albrecht has the impression that the general idea among the natives is that Brooks was killed because he lived with Bullfrog's wife. (105) If such is the case - and it is not easy to discount so much native evidence given to trustworthy men - then the killing of Brooks cannot surely be said to have been without provocation.



There is little native evidence in regard to the attack on Morton. Two aborigines have told J. Hamlyn that Morton was attacked because he lived with a gin he had working for him. (106) Some natives, who today claim that Brooks was a young man, may be confusing him with Morton or someone else. In any case, Morton, a pugilist before he went North, was known to be cruel to the natives. He has told Mountford how he flogged natives and boasted to him that he had shot one. (107) Old Charlie, a native who was employed in the Goniston area, (108) still has marks on his back from whippings he received.

It is said that Tilmouth, when attacked, was camped at a water with a rainstone in it, thus molesting a sacred site. (109) He later became known for his cruelty. When Constable V. Hall visited his station in 1942 he took depositions from a number of natives who claimed that they were hungry and thirsty and had been driven away from waterholes by 'Tillymouth'. (110) All this when an aborigine was entitled to free ingress into and egress from a property and the use of all waters and game on it. (111) It should be noted that the attacks on Tilmouth were cumulative: one trouble led to another. All this evidence suggests that there was human provocation for the attacks by natives, in addition to the gnawing provocation of the drought.

A number of reasons the Board gave for the actions of the aborigines will not stand examination. The two most

specific ones, the advance of the Wallmulla tribe and the woman missionary living amongst naked blacks, can be discounted altogether.

J. D. MacDowall was the only witness who gave real evidence about the advance of the Wallmulla tribe on a marauding expedition from the Western Australian border. But his evidence can be entirely discounted, as he said that he met some natives 200 miles north-west of Coniston in September 1928, who told him that the Wallmulla tribe was on a gin-raiding spree and heading in from there towards Ti-tree. He then said that this would bring them in to the Coniston country in (112) July or August. Besides, Morton claims that he knew each of his attackers, having employed them at times: and yet they were strange natives from the border! In any case, no such tribe as the 'Wallmulla' exists or existed: it is a 'cloaking term', very slightly derogatory, meaning 'the wild ones' or (113) 'the people from the west'. No doubt Stafford's boys and others in the Coniston area who belonged to the Anmatjera tribe called them 'Wallmullas' simply because they came from the west. The real name of the tribe was 'Walpari' or (114) 'Ilpara', as Paddy admitted. The fact that Walpari natives have told visitors about the shootings and still talk about them leaves this beyond doubt.

The woman referred to as living among the blacks and thus lowering their opinion of the white man evidently was Miss. A. Lock. It is unfortunate that she should have been



MISS LOCK AND CHILDREN — HARDING SOAK  
(some suffering from yaws)

Plate II

From Bleakley's Report,  
C.P.P., 1929, II, 1217

made a scapegoat, especially since Australia's greatest woman worker among the aborigines, Mrs. Daisy Bates, was still alive. Women's associations naturally resented this. (115)

Miss Lock had been in Central Australia only for a few months and was working among Anmatjera and Kaititj blacks on the Woodforde, not among the Walpari. (116) The only real evidence for the Board's assertion was Lala's. He claimed that the lubra who held Brooks had visited Miss Lock many times. (117)

The Board assiduously followed this lead: at Alice Springs it heard evidence about the bad effect of unattached missionaries and of Miss Lock in particular; it then dashed off to Hermannsburg where it heard evidence to the same effect; then to Stirling Station and back, hearing similar evidence. (117a)

All this was totally irrelevant. Miss Lock had been doing good work at Harding Soak, tending to the sick and hungry, and had had nothing to do with the Walpari - let alone strange aborigines from the Western Australian border. The common hostility to her becomes highly significant when one recalls that she had been outspoken against comboism. (118)

The Board also blamed unattached missionaries generally for the aborigines' actions. The fact is that there scarcely were any other than Miss Lock, who, more over, was not really 'unattached', being a member of the Australian Aborigines Society. (119) Kramer and D. Adamson were the only two witnesses to mention instances of the activities of unattached missionaries. Kramer said that two young missionaries had

once visited the south-western part of Central Australia and  
(120)  
caused trouble there : this area is irrelevant to the  
Coniston killings. And Adamson mentioned a mysterious (Mr.)  
(121)  
Sache concerning whom I can find no further information.  
The Board listened to a lot of irrelevant evidence. Its claims  
regarding unattached missionaries must surely bring it under  
(122)  
the implication of bias.

Inexperienced white settlers are also blamed. But I  
can think of no white settler in the Coniston area who was  
'inexperienced' unless it be that he was inexperienced in the  
art of treating aborigines humanely. Inexperienced whites  
there were in Central Australia, but none in contact with the  
Walpari. It would be more correct to say that contact in  
(123)  
general, as already pointed out, was a reason for the  
aborigines' actions; and the Board did mention the fact that  
semi-civilized aborigines were getting in contact with the  
(124.)  
myalls.

None of the recorded evidence says anything about  
escaped prisoners from Darwin preaching revolt. Other reasons  
given: the infrequency of police patrols and the inadequacy of  
punishment where there was punishment at all: are more relevant.  
(125)  
A police patrol had not visited Coniston for eighteen months  
prior to the arrival of the police party; and native offenders,  
especially the cattle-and-goat killers, of whom there were many,  
(126)  
frequently went unpunished. Nor was gaol a deterrent to  
(127)  
the offenders: they regarded it as a holiday.

The Board touched on the fundamental reason for the actions of the aborigines when it gave as a reason the loss of native skill for hunting wild game and the consequent preying on the working boys of the stations. But even then it almost missed the point. The main reason for their actions was the drought and the penetration of the land by the whites: this must be coupled with the loss of skill. An analogy may be made here with the position of the whites in South Africa. When the white settlers went to the Coniston country, few of the Walpari were there. (128) But they came in, 'The Crow Mob', (129) attracted by the white man's way of life, especially by curiosity and a craving for his foods: it is significant that of sixty natives convicted for offences at the Alice Springs court from 1/1/1924 to 31/12/1928 thirty-five received sentences for being in unlawful possession of beef or meat (130) and fourteen for having stolen goods or other articles.

This moving in was noticeable in the whole of Central Australia, especially in a drought year and in the Coniston area where the settlers were, so to speak, going to meet the aborigines down the Lander. A lax system of land administration (131) allowed them to do this. The particulars of this penetration and disturbing influence of settlers and prospectors and of the drought have been given in Chapter One. There was no help or adequate supervision from the Government; money, provisions and generosity became scarce for the settler, food and water for the myall, patience for both; tension grew on

both sides until it was the blacks or the whites 'for it'.<sup>(132)</sup>

If Brooks was a combo and Morton a sadist, it only added to this fundamental cause of trouble. It certainly did not bring about retaliation by the whites.

The meeting was an unhappy one.

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It is not too much, then, to say that the Board of Enquiry performed a white-washing function and was intended to do so. The Department of Home and Territories, though not pleased about the shootings, dipped a brush from the outset: it pointed out the virtues of the settlers,<sup>(133)</sup> believed the police and other official reports in toto in spite of<sup>(134)</sup> contradictory evidence, and sometimes added more details to these reports favourable to the settlers: at each camp, said a memorandum of the Department of Home and Territories<sup>(135)</sup> (23/11/1928), articles belonging to Brooks were found; and it passed on this 'information' to inquirers, defending the police action publicly though privately reprimanding<sup>(136)</sup> Cawood, Noblet and Murray.

By appointing a Board of Enquiry composed entirely of police, it showed that it was not prepared to take any chances. Cawood was 'Judge In His Own Cause'<sup>(137)</sup> and the whole Board was appointed 'to satisfy public demand.....'<sup>(138)</sup>, not to

probe for the truth. The Government refused to publish the  
(139)  
evidence and O'Kelly was asked for a sly report. It is  
small wonder then that people should have remarked that either  
the killing of thirty-one natives was considered unimportant  
(140)  
or the facts would not bear discussion.

No doubt Murray and his party were brave men who  
believed that they were doing the right thing and taking the  
only course possible; that the end they had in view justified  
evil means. However, the administration of justice should  
not only be pure, but should also appear to be pure. It was  
not administered purely by the police and the Board made a  
not altogether successful attempt to make it appear pure.

The Coniston killings were thinly white-washed for  
(141)  
£500.



Chapter 4.

WHICH-WAY BOSS?

REFERENCES.

1. Pidgin-English for 'please explain', 'how and why?'.  
2. H. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People; F.E. Baume, Tragedy Track; A. Russell, A Tramp-Loyal in Wild Australia. D. Lockwood's Fair Dinkum (1960) (read after thesis written) is an exception.
3. The Proceedings were never released to the public; but cf. footnote 15 and text (below)
4. The original is in the Commonwealth Archives, Canberra. I have been unable to locate a copy in Adelaide, but see Register, 16/3/29, 20/3/29; Adelaide Observer 20/3/29, 20/4/29, 27/4/29; Advertiser 19/3/29.
5. e.g., The Register News-Pictorial, 19/3/29.
6. 23/3/29.
7. 7/6/29; cf. Sydney Bulletin, 20/2/29; Sydney Worker, 20/3/29.
8. Sydney Evening News, 24/4/29.
9. Brisbane Daily Telegraph, 30/3/29; Advertiser, 7/3/29; cf. Sydney Morning Herald, 5/3/29. Some of the suggestions in Lefroy's article were welcomed.
10. ibid. 14/1/29; cf. CPD vol. 121 (1929) pp. 276, 338.
11. Register 7/1/29
12. Advertiser 30/1/29.
13. Register 30/1/29; 2/2/29; cf. Burton to Deane, 15/2/29 in File of Papers.
14. See File of Papers.
15. ibid., memorandum 9/4/29 by J.A. C(arrodus) (prepared for the use of the Minister for Home Affairs in an address to the April Conference of the National Missionary Council).
16. J.W. Bleakley, 'The Aborigines and Halfe-Castes of Central Australia and North Australia' - Report, CPP 1929, II, 1159ff. This report differs conspicuously from the Finding of the Board concerning missionaries and conditions for aborigines.
17. See File of Papers; Sydney Morning Herald, 29/3/29; Age, 19/3/29.

18. File of Papers.
19. Register, 30/3/29; Argus, 3/4/29; Sydney Sun 9/4/29; Sydney Morning Herald, 9/4/29; Rev. J. Needham to Bruce, 4/4/29, in File of Papers.
20. Brisbane Standard, Courier Mail, Daily Telegraph, 30/3/29.
21. Melbourne Herald 11/4/29, Argus 12/4/29, 11/4/29; cf. Age 22/3/29.
22. G. Tait to Bruce, 27/6/29, in File of Papers. Melbourne Herald, 9/5/29; Age 10/5/29; Argus, 10/5/29; Sydney Morning Herald, 10/5/29; Register 11/5/29.
23. File of Papers.
24. ibid, Abbott to Morley, 2/8/29.
25. ibid, Morley to Abbott, 19/9/29.
26. File of Papers.
- 26(a). cf. Advertiser, 28/2/29 (Ed.)
27. Finding of the Board, p. 2.
28. ibid, p. 1.
29. Proceedings pp. 27, 36, 38.
30. ibid, p. 56.
31. ibid, pp. 46, 42.
32. M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 229.
33. Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory (1924) CPP 1925, II, 2557.
34. J.W. Bleakley, Report (loc. cit) 1185; F.E. Baume, Tragedy Track, Chapter 12; M. Terry, ibid, p. 227; T.G.H. Strehlow, Interview with the author, 6/4/60; cf. Proceedings p. 45; Aboriginal Ordinance No. 9 of 1918, s. 53 (1); C.T. Madigan, Central Australia pp. 261, 277-80.
35. Finding of the Board, p. 2.
36. Proceedings, p. 40.
37. ibid, pp. 8-14, 20.

38. ibid, p. 8.
39. ibid, p. 13.
40. See ibid, pp. 53-55, 62-65.
41. ibid, p. 40; cf. Willson to Clemens, 19/12/28; Bruce to McCormack, 28/11/28; in File of Papers.
42. Finding of the Board, p. 1.
43. Proceedings, passim, especially pp. 43, 44, 51, 55; cf. 'Statement from Randle Stafford taken down by Robert Purvis etc.,' (August) 1928 in File of Papers, R.B. Stafford, Letter to the Editor, Pastoral Review, 16/2/29, p. 165.
44. Report 're Fred Brooks, deceased.....' 2/9/28 in File of Papers. O'Kelly minuted 'from whom?' but did not elicit the information during the Enquiry.
45. Proceedings, pp. 42, 45, 50, 51, 52, 56; Inquest into the death of 17 aborigines, 13/1/29; Deposition of W.G. Murray before E. Allchurch, S.M. (September) 1928; W.G. Murray, 'Report re Fred Brooks, deceased..' 2/9/28, in File of Papers; N.T. Times, Northern Standard, 9/11/28.
46. See A.P. Elkin, 'Aboriginal Evidence and Justice in North Australia,' Part III, in Oceania, 1947 (vol.17) pp. 173ff.; G.P. Mountford, Interview with the author, 23/2/60; cf. Chapter II, footnote 46 and text (above).
47. Proceedings p. 10.
48. ibid., passim; N.T. Times, Northern Standard, 9/11/28.
49. ibid; Proceedings, pp. 50-53. According to C.P. Mountford Mallam was very perturbed because there were no survivors.
50. T.G.H. Strehlow, Interview with the author, 6/4/60; C.P. Mountford, Interview with the author, 23/2/60; entries in Diary, 13/9/42, 19/6/42; Rev. F. W. Albrecht, Letter to the author, 18/5/60; cf. N.T. Times, 13/11/28; Morley to Abbott, 20/4/29, in File of Papers.
51. See above, Chapter II, p21
52. Finding of the Board, p. 2.

53. Proceedings, p. 62; W. Morton (per B. Sandford) 'Report of an attack by Blacks on me with intent to murder.....', 30/8/28 in File of Papers.
54. See Northern Standard, N.T. Times, 9/11/28.
55. e.g. Tippenbah - see M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 303.
56. See Proceedings, pp. 42-65.
57. ibid, p. 56.
58. ibid pp. 9-10; cf. pp. 55, 53.
59. ibid, p. 44; Interview with the author, 7/4/60.
60. Proceedings pp. 56, 54.
61. I am indebted to Mr. C.P. Mountford, who was personally acquainted with Wilson, for this suggestion. For the trial see CPP 1946-8, v & p., p. 45 (this paper was not printed and hence not read by the author); Northern Standard, 25/10/46.
62. Rev. P.A. Scherer, Letter to the author, 20/5/60; cf. Register 11/9/28.
63. Mr. X (desires anonymity), Interview with the author, 13/4/60.
64. Interview with the author, 6/4/60.
65. Interview with the author, 23/2/60.
66. Bleakley to Hometer, 15/10/28, in File of Papers.
67. G.P. Mountford, Entries in Diary, 13/9/42, 19/6/42.
68. 12/4/60.
69. See File of Papers.
70. Proceedings, pp. 50, 51, 53, 54, cf. 42; cf. Finding of the Board, p. 1-2; P. Hasluck, Black Australians, p. 164, on self-defence.
- 70(a). cf. Register 2/2/29.
71. Finding of the Board, p. 1-2.
72. Proceedings, p. 51.

73. ibid, p. 11.
74. cf. W.G. Murray, 'Report re Fred Brooks, deceased, ...' 2/9/28; 'Report re attack on W. Morton by natives,' 19/10/28; 'Notes Made by the Home Department,' 23/11/28, in File of Papers.
75. Finding of the Board, p. 2.
76. T.G.H. Strehlow, Interview with the author, 6/4/60; cf. 'Report of the Inspector of Police' in Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory (1912), CPP 1913, III, 329f.; Tuckiar's case (below, Chapter V); E. Hill, Great Australian Loneliness, p. 148.
77. Proceedings, p. 42; Inquest into the death of 17 aborigines (loc. cit.), deposition of W. Briscoe, 13/1/29.
78. Proceedings p. 47; cf. J.W. Bleakley, Report (loc. cit.) 1190; R.B. Stafford, Letter to the Editor, Pastoral Review, 16/2/29, p. 165.
79. cf. Rev. E.D. McGregor in N.T. Times, 9/11/28; P. Hasluck, Black Australians, p. 123.
80. Personification of 'revenge.'
81. Proceedings p. 50, cf. pp. 44,46.
82. My emphasis. See N.T. Times, Northern Standard, 9/11/28.
83. Interview with the author, 7/4/60.
84. See Proceedings pp. 42 - 65, passim, especially 42, 46, 50, 51, 53, 54.
85. ibid, Exhibit 9.
86. See File of Papers.
87. Rev. F.W. Albrecht, Letter to the author, 18/4/60; cf. Cawood to Clemens, 8/9/28, 25/10/28 in File of Papers.
88. Deane to Cawood, 26/4/29, in ibid.
89. cf. Cawood to Clemens, 6/12/28, 8/4/29, in ibid.
90. A.J. Vogan to the Minister for Home and Territories (sic), 31/1/29, in ibid. The emphasis is mine.

91. See Chapter III, footnote 72 (above)
92. cf. Chapter I, footnote 57 and text (above).  
The only regulation governing the use of fire arms by aborigines was s. 35 of Aboriginal Ordinance No. 9 of 1918 (slightly altered subsequently) which provided that a Protector might grant a licence, to be produced on demand, to any aborigine to carry fire arms.
93. Mrs. J. Hamlyn, Letter to the author, 7/4/60;  
cf. A.O. Neville, Australia's Coloured Minority, p. 214.
94. cf. A.P. Elkin, The Australian Aborigines, pp. 35-37.
95. See, e.g., D. Bates, The Passing of the Aborigines, London, 1938, p. 154-5; H. Basedow, Knights of the Boomerang, p. 28.
96. M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 257.
97. F.A. Pockley to the Department of Home and Territories, 16/11/28; 'Statement from Randle Stafford taken down by Robert Purvis.....', (August) 1928, in File of Papers; R.B. Stafford, Letter to the Editor, Pastoral Review, 16/2/29, p. 165; N.T. Times, Northern Standard, 9/11/28.
98. Advertiser 3/9/28; Register, 11/9/28; M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 222.
99. Deposition by W.G. Murray before E. Allchurch (September) 1928 (loc. cit.)
100. Interview with the author, 6/4/60.
101. H.K. Fry, 'Kinship in Western Central Australia' in Oceania, vol. IV, No. 4, p. 474; C.P. Mountford, Entry in Diary 13/9/42; cf. A.P. Elkin, The Australian Aborigines, pp. 112-115.
102. C.P. Mountford, Letter to the author (n.d. - received 30/5/60).
103. Informant requests anonymity.
104. Rev. T. Fleming, Letters to the author, 13/5/60, 28/5/60. Natives have given Rev. P.A. Scherer (Interview with the author, 9/3/60) similar accounts.
105. Rev. F. W. Albrecht, Letter to the author, 18/4/60.  
B. Bowman (Letter to the author, 3/5/60) declares that Brooks was killed when the supply of minties he had been giving to the natives ran out.

106. J. Hamlyn, Letter to the author, 7/4/60.
107. C.P. Mountford, Interview with the author, 29/4/60.
108. Rev. F.W. Albrecht, Letter to the author, 18/4/60.
109. J. Hamlyn, Letter to the author 7/4/60.
110. V. Hall, Report on North-West Patrol, 30.3.42 / 5.5.42, May 9th, 1942 -- in possession of C.P. Mountford.
111. Commonwealth Gazette, Land Ordinance No. 14 of 1924, s. 21(e), 34(b).
112. Proceedings, p. 16.
113. N.B. Tindale, Interview with the author, 13/4/60.
114. Proceedings. p. 11.
115. Blanche Stephens to Abbott, 13/6/29, in File of Papers; cf. Register, 9/1/29, 11/1/29.
116. Register, 12/9/28; Proceedings p. 36.
117. Deposition of Lala before E. Allchurch, S.M.; (Sept.) 1928 in File of Papers; cf. Proceedings p. 57.
- 117(a). ibid, passim; see map Chapter III (above).
118. ibid p. 36; cf. News 14/3/29.
119. ibid pp. 36, 37.....
120. ibid p. 23.
121. ibid p. 24.
122. cf. above, Chapter IV, footnote 19 and text; Register 31/1/29, 8/2/29; Morley to Abbott, 20/4/29; J.A. C(arrodus), memorandum 9/4/29 in File of Papers.
123. Above, Chapter I.
124. Finding of the Board, p. 3.
125. R.B. Stafford, Letter to the Editor, Pastoral Review, 16/2/29, p. 265.
126. Cawood to Clemens 6/12/28, 30/8/28, 25/10/28; C.H. Noblet, 'Report re natives killed by Police Party', 8/12/28 in File of Papers; Proceedings, p. 61.

127. ibid, pp. 35, 36, 38, 26; Cawood to Clemens, 6/12/28; Noblet, ibid in File of Papers: Advertiser, 15/11/28; Rev. F.W. Albrecht, Letter to the author, 5/5/60; cf. News 13/2/30.
128. Proceedings, p. 41.
129. Outback term for 'intelligent parasites,' 'hangers-on', cf. Proceedings, p. 18.
130. ibid, Exhibit 10. D. Lockwood (Fair Dinkum, p. 84) states that 40 were 'charged with unlawful possession of food - meat, tea and sugar.'
131. North Australia Commission, Second Annual Report (1928) CPP 1929-31, IV, 321-323; cf. Rev. A. McGregor in N.T. Times, 9/11/28.
132. cf. Proceedings, pp. 41, 43, 47; M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 277; Register, 8/9/28, 11/9/28.
133. 'Notes made by the Home Department,' 23/11/28; memorandum (9/4/29) by J.A. C(arrodus) in File of Papers.
134. See memorandum of 23/11/28 in ibid.
135. File of Papers.
136. Clemens to Cawood, 9/11/28; Clemens to Australian Natives' Association, 12/12/28; memorandum 26/4/29.; Deane to Cawood, 12/3/29 in File of Papers; Age, 19/3/29
137. M.M. Bennett, The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being, p. 82.
138. Clemens to Cawood, 9/11/28, in File of Papers.
139. cf. footnote 3 (above); and see Rev. J.S. Needham to Bruce, 4/4/29 in File of Papers; M.M. Bennett, ibid, p. 83 (footnote 3).
140. Smith's Weekly, 23/3/29.
141. Calculated from receipts, estimates etc. in File of Papers, passim.





MULGA KILLED BY DROUGHT



THE WILDERNESS BLOSSOMS

From R.H. Croll, Wide Horizons, facing 290

Plate 12



MULGA KILLED BY DROUGHT



THE WILDERNESS BLOSSOMS

From R. H. Croll, Wide Horizons, facing page

Plate 12

## Chapter 5.

### AFTERMATH.

When the drought broke in 1930, conditions for white and black improved in a very short time for the country has  
(1) amazing recuperative powers. After the two punitive expeditions, the Walpari made themselves scarce for a while; and indeed, most of them have lived apart from the white man ever since: they went to the native settlements at Haasts Bluff and Yuendumu,  
(2) taking with them stories of the shootings to while their time away about the camp fires. The work  
(3) Willshire had set out to do in the nineteenth century was completed: the Walpari, last Central Australian tribe seriously to endanger white settlement, had been 'pacified'. Mr. B. Bowman, now owner of Goniston Station, claims that the ultimate effect of the shootings upon the natives was good for they are 'quite the best types I have come across' and the relations  
(4) between Walpari and white are the happiest in the North. There is much truth in this, but the relations are between masters and servants. Should the aborigines make a point of enjoying as well as claiming equal rights with the whites the future may well dispute G. L. A. Abbott's claim that a monument erected by Stafford in honour of Brooks is 'the last memorial  
(5) marking the strife between black and white in Australia'.  
(6) After 1928 the anthropologists redoubled their efforts to obtain information about the Central Australian aborigines before they should die out.

The settlements the Walpari went to did not exist in

1929, but, contemporaneously with the Coniston killings there had been a movement for the establishment of more reserves and for Federal control of aborigines<sup>(7)</sup><sup>(8)</sup>. Arnhem Land was set aside for the natives in 1930, but there was no increase in the size of reserves in Central Australia nor any improvement of them for some time. A suggestion was made in 1929 that the three great inland reserves be amalgamated under Federal control. The Federal Government took the matter up and it was discussed at the 1929 Premiers' Conference<sup>(9)</sup>. The movement foundered, however, when the Nationalist Government was defeated late in 1929 and the depression set in.

Both these movements had, peculiarly enough, derived strength from the revelations concerning the Coniston killings. Though the Federal Government had so grossly handled the affair, many people came to realize that a uniform national policy towards the aborigines was needed. The movement for Federal control still exists, though it received a set back at the 1944 referenda<sup>(10)</sup>.

Some of the settlers also went up a gully. Morton left Central Australia<sup>(11)</sup> and Tilmouth was no longer content to sleep under a trough on the Lander,<sup>(12)</sup> In 1932 C. Young gave up all hope of stocking Cockatoo Creek and abandoned<sup>(13)</sup> the lease.

There were some fairly prompt changes in the Administration. Thirty-one natives had been killed for one white

man and a good deal of pressure <sup>(14)</sup> was placed on the Department of Home and Territories to take disciplinary measures against certain of its Centralian staff. It began to look about for scape-goats. <sup>(15)</sup> In December 1929 Sergeant Noblet <sup>(16)</sup> left his post. He had been hauled over the coals by O'Kelly before the Board and the Department of Home Affairs had considered the reasons he gave for his failure to ask for police reports and to see that they were adequate to be <sup>(17)</sup> 'unsatisfactory', which indeed they were. Cawood himself had been severely reprimanded by the Department of Home Affairs and left his post in 1929. <sup>(18)</sup> The Department also instructed Cawood to send Murray to a South Australian police <sup>(19)</sup> depot for further training. After 1928 he became known as 'Killer' Murray and his tracker as 'Police' Paddy, names which <sup>(20)</sup> the natives still fear. There is a rumour that he sent a wire to his mother saying that there was more fun in leading <sup>(21)</sup> the police parties than in shooting kangaroos.

On February 13th, 1929, the Federal authorities announced that two new policemen would be appointed in Central Australia and that the Police Force would be reorganized along <sup>(22)</sup> the lines of the Canadian North-West Mounties. Nothing came of the latter proposal. However, supplementary ration depots were established for aborigines for the duration of the <sup>(23)</sup> drought, the half-castes in the "Bung" at Alice Springs <sup>(24)</sup> were at last removed in 1929 and in the same year the first Government Medical Officer was appointed. He also

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became Chief Protector of Aborigines.

Nevertheless, it is more than probable that the Nationalist Government lost quite a few votes at the 1929 elections because of the Coniston killings.

A more important result of the 1928 ructions was that they helped to prevent the sending out of any more punitive expeditions. Public opinion, roused, as already pointed out, in 1928, would not tolerate them. <sup>When</sup> in 1933 a punitive expedition left Darwin to operate against Tuckiar and his horde who had murdered seventeen Japanese and white men,

including a constable sent out after them, there was a universal yuckai. (26) The Government called the expedition off,

and, after Tuckiar had tamely accompanied a 'peace mission' back to Darwin and was sentenced to death, bowed again to public opinion and successfully appealed to the High Court against the conviction it had obtained. (27) No attempts to moot punitive expeditions have been made since.

Attitudes and interests of the various parties in relation to the aborigines have already been hinted at, but need clarifying. The Coniston killings happened at a time when Centralian settlers were not very vocal, having no Press of their own. (28) Only a few 'Centralian Battlers' bothered to write to the southern Press about the incidents, but attitudes emerged clearly before the Board of Enquiry.

The settlers of 1928 believed that the aborigine

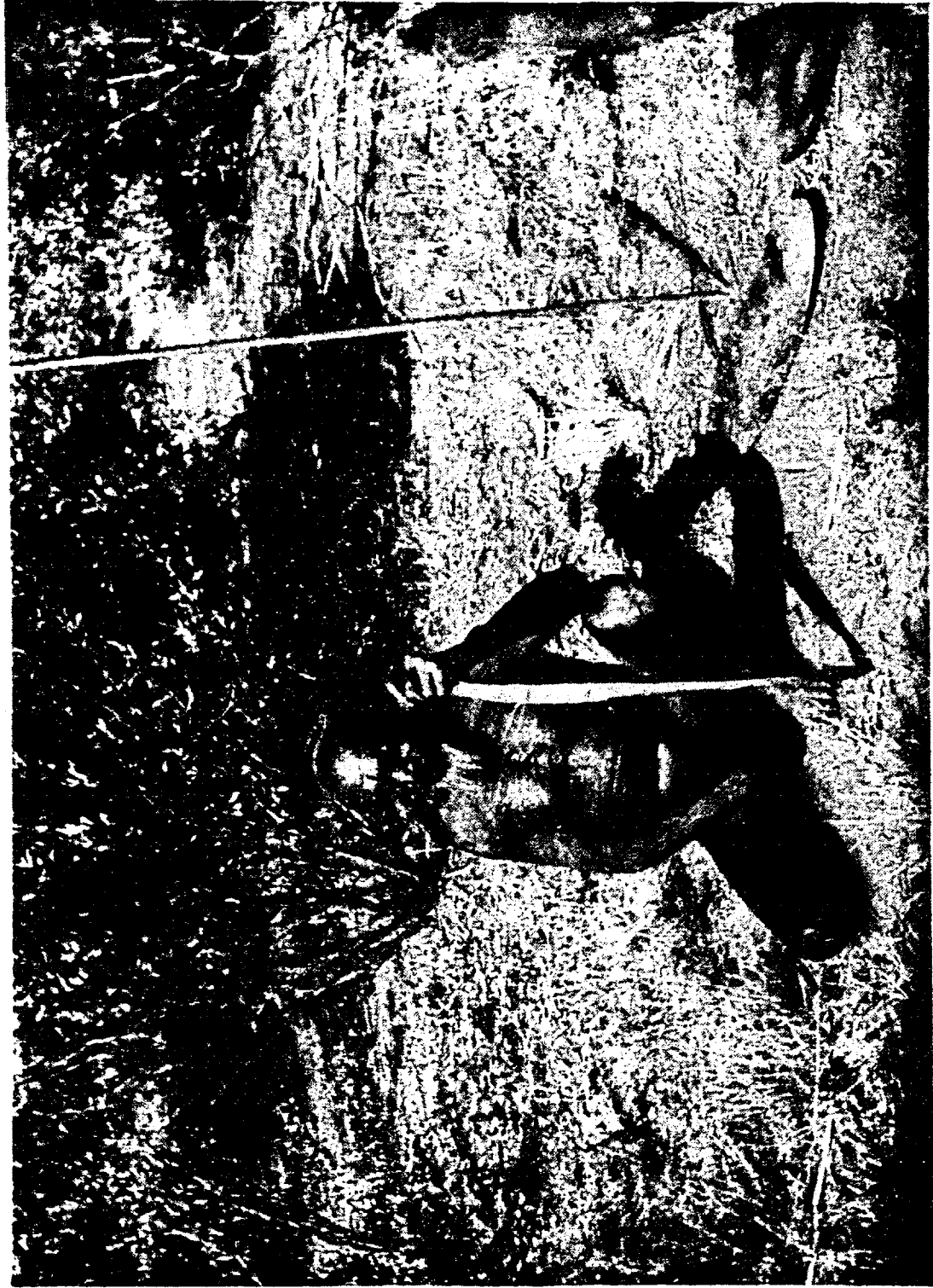


Plate 13 'Old Bullfrog' with his woomera sits 'Dreaming' beside his spear and bean-tree shield.

From Dean, B. and Carrell, V., *Dust for the Dancers*, Sydney, 1955, facing p. 54

should be put and kept 'in his place'. It was revealed at the Enquiry that shooting over their heads or cruel treatment were prevalent methods of doing this. (29) J. D. O'Donnell wrote in December 1928, in connexion with the Coniston killings that 'All old bushmen treat them (the aborigines) the same as a dog. Hence the contentment that reigned for many years'. (30) The natives had to be 'pacified', not met on their own terms, before settlement could be expected. (31) And then they had to be treated with a firm hand if the stations were to be run properly. (32) Yet most of them refused to acknowledge that they were virtually indispensable to the pastoral industry, clinging blindly to the maxim that 'blacks and cattle don't mix'. (33) Perhaps this was due to the prevalent conviction that the aborigines were a dying and degenerate race (34) and that the pastoral industry would have to do without them some day; a conviction which was coupled with a peculiar belief in the capabilities of aborigines: only a lazy black-fellow could starve in the drought, (35) for example. Nor were there any rivalries among the settlers to weaken their common feeling against the blacks. Stafford summed this attitude up when he wrote to the 'Pastoral Review' in December 1928: 'Treat the blacks as human beings, but not as friends'. (36)

A belief in their own sort, which, I believe, it would be possible to trace to origins similar to those attributed to 'mateship' by Ward, (37) accentuated this



attitude. But the more immediate reasons for this belief - hardship and loneliness and the years - are evident in the inscription Stafford wrote on Brooks' gravestone:

'Old Man, in the early days of Coniston,  
Those days when our troubles were great  
In the years you and I worked together  
I found you a true and staunch mate'.<sup>(38)</sup>

Very few of the old settlers have ever even heard that the natives say that Brooks was a combo; if they have they deny it. Brooks was one of their sort.

This belief in their own sort caused them to snarl not a little at the rest of the world, especially when the aboriginal problem was discussed. They were hostile to missionaries, though one would not have expected it: for they had common interests with them. The missionaries were out to civilize and educate the native and attend to his physical well-being, thus enhancing his value to the settler. Most of the settlers could not see this, however, and heaped the blame for the disturbances among the natives upon the semi-civilized and mission-educated natives.<sup>(40)</sup> The Board knew what it was about when it made a scapegoat of the missionaries. When, in 1929, the Caledon Bay natives attacked a tribe near Groote Eylandt Mission Station, a correspondent of the 'Northern Standard' wrote that 'The Tragedy of the Centre' slush having proved ineffective, the missionaries

will be able to sob to their hearts' content over the poor neglected aborigine who only needs to be taught that God told Adam "You got no trousers" <sup>(41)</sup>. Hostility towards missionaries was prevalent in the whole of the Territory.

The settlers snapped equally as much at 'the South' in general. They naturally resented criticisms by people less experienced and more ignorant than themselves, but tended to treat all Southerners as such. What was worse, the Southerners did not realize that the Northerners were not getting a fair spin. <sup>(42)</sup> Stafford concisely expressed this attitude also when he criticized McGregor for not having 'one word for the honest, hard working bushmen who never did any person an injury', <sup>(43)</sup> (sic). Besides, the people of the South in their day had shot more aborigines than the Centralians <sup>(44)</sup> were ever likely to do!

In short, the settlers wanted to be left alone to handle the aborigines in what they believed to be the correct way. Governmental control was welcomed only when the aborigines got out of hand as in 1928. And they had no ideals for the aborigines, starting as they did, at the point where the southern settlers had left off after years of frustration and despair. <sup>(45)</sup>

A certain loss of idealism through contact becomes evident even among the few missionaries of the North when one compares the statements of old hands like Heinrich and especially Kramer with those of Lock and McGregor <sup>(46)</sup>.

It is evident also in the Central Australian Administration of 1928 as was demonstrated by its handling of the Coniston killings.

Thus the settlers' attitude towards the aborigines was the prevailing one in Central Australia. The Administration was not prepared to put any ideas into practice which would prejudice the cause of those who were developing <sup>(47)</sup> the country for the white man. Its policy was negative and indefinite.

This is not to be wondered at, for it was not given a definite policy to administer. The policy of the Federal Government was at the cross-roads. <sup>(48)</sup> This was demonstrated clearly in 1928 and 1929. The Department of Home Affairs claimed that the Aborigines Ordinance of 1918 had set out a <sup>(49)</sup> positive policy. But it had no provisions for the real myall nor was it and various alterations to it, such as the 'reservation' clause for aborigines on any property, being <sup>(50)</sup> enforced in 1928. The early ideals of Christianizing and educating the native, treating him as a British subject and attending to his physical well-being had disappeared soon after the first Australian colonies were given self-government. Nothing, except a negative policy of protection instead of positive assistance and of reservations in name only, had replaced them. <sup>(51)</sup> And even this policy was being undermined:

for now, in 1928, the Federal Government was battered on all sides by conflicting ideas and schemes <sup>(51a)</sup> for the aborigines.

'Indirect Rule' was in the forefront of these. The idea was first taken up in relation to the aborigines only in 1925 by the Aborigines' Protection League. <sup>(52)</sup> There was talk of 'leaving the native alone' in a native state or states co-incident with tribal boundaries, to govern himself and finally to have representatives in Canberra. <sup>(53)</sup>

Those who advocated it were told that they were ahead of their time. <sup>(54)</sup> It would mean taking valuable land from the settlers and would hinder the supply of labour.

The anthropologists of the day had similar, though less utopian or advanced (as you prefer), ideals and a number belonged to the Aborigines' Protection League. Generally speaking their attitude was that an attempt should be made to preserve the aborigines both because it was the only humane course to take and because it would preserve a rich field of study. This was to be achieved by establishing inviolable reserves and allowing the natives to lead their tribal life there. Few advocated 'civilizing' the aborigines: they had <sup>(55)</sup> been almost civilized out of existence.

The missionaries were still propagating the old ideals, though they had come to realize that they must be put into practice slowly. They wanted reserves with mission establishments on them, and they had them to a certain extent in

(56)  
1928. But the Government did not realize that missions were not enough or that if they were to be the only settle-  
ments on the reserves they should be heavily subsidized. (57)

Most people, including the Government, regarded the aborigine as a child, to be treated as a child. (58) But a few scientists were beginning to assert categorically that the aborigines were equal in intelligence with white people. (59)

There was also a lot of negative criticism: the treatment of the aborigines was un-British (60) and their condition that of slavery. (61)

The Government was bewildered by all these ideas. It is small wonder, then, that when in 1930 Blakely announced the Policy of his Government after a consideration of Bleakly's Report it was still very indefinite. (62) Not until 1937 was a positive policy of assimilation ~~enunciated~~ <sup>enunciated</sup> (63) and even then the full-bloods were not included in it; and not until after World War II was it put into practice to any extent. The Coniston killings helped to bring this slow change about. Today the aborigines are handled by hands wearing kid gloves. (64) But in 1928 the idea of assimilation (65) was abhorred in most circles. There was a wide conviction that the aborigine would die out and if he did not the Government was confident that Central Australia could be developed sufficiently to provide means for his livelihood; (66) and left the matter at that.

But, after the revelation in 1928 of so many injustices

meted out to the aborigines, one would have expected the change in policy and practice to be faster. The fallacy of the idea, for example, that the aborigines were British subjects with the full legal rights of such subjects was patently shown by the Enquiry and the trials. (67) Practice differed widely from the letter of the law. And it was demonstrated that the aborigine was hungry, especially during the drought, and that little was being done to improve his conditions. In 1931 an expedition found in nearly every case 'real pot bellies' among children of the Walpari at Cockatoo Creek and attributed them to 'nutritional imbalance'. (68)

Even if the Government had had a definite policy and had been willing to enforce it, it was revealed by its handling of the Coniston killings that it would not have been able to.

In the first place there was not the necessary machinery in Central Australia. It was both in-efficient and overloaded. Cawood did not comment on the police reports he forwarded to the Department of Home and Territories until asked to and then his remarks were only guesses; (69) Murray's reports were haphazard and Noblet did not even bother to make inquiries in order to supplement them. But great distances, poor means of communication and the great number of duties to perform told against these men. Murray had to write hasty reports: between May 26th and November 20th, 1928, he travelled almost (70) 8000 miles. Noblet's duties in addition to his police

work have already been mentioned; and he had only five constables under him, one of whom was on leave at the time of the Coniston killings. <sup>(71)</sup> The legal system was quite in-efficient. Nor was the Government Resident above attempting to hoodwink his superiors in Canberra: when asked to forward a Coroner's certificate, which, he had said, dispensed with an inquest into the death of Brooks, he forwarded one dated August 7th, <sup>He</sup> and the Coroner had learnt of the death of Brooks only on the 11th. <sup>(72)</sup> The inquests into the death of the various natives took place more than three months after the shootings. <sup>(73)</sup>

Nor did the Department of Home Affairs have adequate control over the Administration. It took eight days and often more for its despatches to reach the Government Resident who was often slow to reply. <sup>(74)</sup> Communication by telegram was not practised as fully as it might have been. Frequent changes <sup>(75)</sup> of Ministers did not do anything to better this state of affairs, nor did ignorance <sup>(76)</sup> of conditions in Central Australia.

The Department of Home Affairs was also slow to reply to requests for information and to criticism. Perhaps it was overworked or apathetic. When the storm burst after the Darwin trial, Howse was in Sydney trying to enhance his election prospects. At that time he had no information other than Press reports about the Coniston killings. <sup>(77)</sup> He and the succeeding Minister left the handling of the affair to

Clemens. But more probably it was part of the Government's policy to answer criticisms when it could be said that it was too late to act upon them. Thus the Association for the Protection of Native Races wrote to Abbot on May 14th 1929 asking for a reply to a letter of March 20th, and on June 6th telegraphed for a reply. The reply was finally written on June 7th and posted a number of days later. (78)

The manner in which the Government withheld information points to the same conclusion. Bleakley's Report, which had been due a few months earlier, arrived at the Prime Minister's office on January 24th, almost a week before the Finding. (79) But because, it seems, some of its criticisms were damning and it was favourable to the scapegoats of the Enquiry, the missionaries, it was withheld from the public until February 9th, (80) by which time the Finding had been thoroughly aired.

The Government, then, was not able or willing to enforce a definite policy. It was fairly solidly behind 'those isolated settlers who have suffered the loss of their stock and have been living in fear of their lives;' (81) and because of that and because of a highly developed sensitivity to overseas opinion, it was prepared to hush the Coniston killings up. Marr remarked in 1927: 'If we were to broadcast to the world that nearly 100 years ago the aborigines were treated in a dastardly way - and they were - we should do injury to our White Australia Policy; whereas we wish



to convince the world that we are as mindful of our black  
(82)  
brethren as of the whites'.

This desire to convince was strong upon the Government in  
1928; but a corresponding desire to take remedial measures  
was absent.

Chapter 5.

AFTERMATH

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1. cf. Advertiser 3/3/31, by which time the country north of Alice Springs was 'at its best'.
2. D. Lockwood, Crocodiles and Other People, p. 162.
3. See W.H. Willshire, The Aborigines of Central Australia, Adel., 1891 and The Land of Dawning, Adel., 1896.; and cf. T.G.H. Strehlow, Dark and White Australians, p. 23.
4. Letter to the author, 3/5/60.
5. Australia's Frontier Province, p. 138.
6. cf. News 18/2/29; Advertiser, 5/8/29, 24/8/29, 14/8/30, 23/2/33 (where expeditions from the Adelaide University are listed); N.M. Bennett, The Australian Aborigine as a Human Being, p. 15 (footnote.)
7. Advertiser 13/11/28, 19/3/29, 1/6/28, 15/6/28; cf. Blakely to Morley, 6/5/30 in File of Papers.
8. Register 29/2/28; Advertiser, 19/6/28; Sydney Morning Herald, 13/2/28, 25/5/29; CPD vol. 116 (1927) p. 509; A.O. Neville, Australia's Coloured Minority, pp. 36, 204-6. The movement for Federal control had begun when negotiations for the transfer of the Northern Territory were in progress, then lapsed only to be revived after the 'Kimberley atrocities.'
9. CPP 1929, II, 1439; cf. News, 12/4/29; Advertiser, 15/4/29, 14/2/30; Sydney Evening News, 24/4/29.
10. A.O. Neville, Australia's Coloured Minority, p. 207.
11. M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 217 (footnote); News 25/3/30; R.B. Stafford, Interview with the author, 7/4/60.
12. M. Terry, ibid. Tilmouth remained, however, on Napperby.
13. Director of Lands (H. Barclay), N.T. Admin., Letter to the author, 10/5/60.
14. Especially by the Association for the Protection of Native Races; see Morley to Abbott, 19/9/29, 22/7/29, 15/5/29 in File of Papers; Register, 11/5/29.
15. T.G.H. Strehlow first suggested (Interview 6/4/60) this to me; cf. J.A. C(arrodus), draft of letter to Morley, 28/5/29, in File of Papers.

16. Report on the Administration of Central Aust. (1930), CPP 1929-31, III, 2907.
17. Memorandum 26/4/29; Gawood to Deane, 8/4/29 (containing Noblet's explanation); cf. Deane to Gawood, 12/3/29 in File of Papers.
18. Report on the Administration of Central Aust. (1930), CPP 1929-31, III, p. 2905; cf. Clemens to Gawood, 9/11/28; Deane to Gawood, 12/3/29; Memorandum 26/4/29 in File of Papers.
19. Deane to Gawood 12/3/29 in ibid.
20. Mrs. W. Heffernan, Letter to the author, 10/5/60; cf. C.P. Mountford, Entry in Diary, 13/9/42. Centralians are very fond of nick naming well known personalities.
21. Informant requests anonymity.
22. Advertiser, 14/2/29.
23. Report on the Administration of Central Aust. (1929), CPP 1929-31, III, 2896.
24. Sydney Morning Herald, 26/2/29.
25. Report on the Administration of Central Aust. (1929), CPP 1929-31, III, 2906, 2908.
26. A yell; hubbub; out cry.
27. For a vivid account of the Tuckiar episode see D. Lockwood, Crocodiles and Other People, pp. 139-147; I.J. Idriess, Man Tracks, Sydney, 1935, Chapter 33; cf. Sydney Morning Herald 5/9/33, 6/9/33, 12/9/33, 14/9/33.
28. Register 15/11/28, 31/12/28; cf. Advertiser, 24/12/28.
29. Proceedings, pp. 8, 14, 16, 25 & cf. 6-7.
30. Register 31/12/28.
31. Advertiser, 3/9/28; cf. Register 8/9/28; A.P. Elkin, The Australian Aborigines, p. 322-3.
32. Proceedings, pp. 2, 18, 21, 27, 64; cf. Register, 31/12/28; CPD vol. 116 (1927) pp. 810-813 (Mr. Nelson).
33. Proceedings, pp. 30, 41; CPD ibid p. 955; cf. M.Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 310.
34. See Chapter I, footnote 88 (above); also Register, 15/11/28; News, 21/9/32.

35. Proceedings, pp. 4, 6, 24, 30.
36. Pastoral Review, 16/2/29, p. 165.
37. See R. Ward, The Australian Legend, Melb., 1958.
38. Stafford was able to recite this to the author from memory. See C.T. Madigan, Central Australia, p. 237.
39. cf. G.M.H. Clark in Australian Signpost (Ed. T.A.G. Hungerford) Melbourne, 1956, pp. 135, 140.
40. Proceedings pp. 18, 21, 23, 24, 29, 30, 32, 34, 57-8; cf. J.W. Bleakley Report (loc.cit.), 1165-1166; Register 29/1/27, 11/9/28, 8/9/28.
41. Northern Standard, 15/3/29 & cf. 1/2/29.
42. M. Terry, Hidden Wealth and Hiding People, p. 242; cf. Proceedings pp. 14, 30. Terry regarded himself as a Northerner.
43. Pastoral Review, 16/2/29, p. 165.
44. M. Terry, ibid, p. 235.
45. cf. P. Hasluck, Black Australians, p. 177.
46. See Proceedings pp. 22-23, 26, 27-28, 36-39.
47. cf. Cawood to Clemens 25/10/28; C.H. Noblet, 'Report re Natives killed by Police Party,' 8/12/28, in File of Papers.
48. It remained there for sometime.
49. Argus 25/7/29.
50. See Chapter I, p.8 (above); also Proceedings p. 27; M.H. Bennett, Human Rights for the Australian Aborigines, Brisbane, 1957, p. 4; J.W. Bleakley, Report (loc. cit.) 1190.
51. See references in Chapter I, footnote 74 (above).
- 51(a). Bleakley lists them in his Report (loc.cit.) 1186.
52. J.C. Genders, The Australian Aborigines, 4/1/37 (typed MS) p. 1.

53. ibid, p.2; references in Chapter I, footnote 86 (above); Register 9/4/26, 4/1/28, 19/1/29, 15/3/28; Advertiser, 21/6/30, 29/3/26, (cf. 5/4/26), 5/1/28, 10/3/28; Argus 22/2/27; London Times, 8/4/26.
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55. cf. Aborigines' Protection League, A Statement etc. (loc. cit.) p. 5; News, 21/9/32; T.G.H. Strehlow, Dark and White Australians, p. 8.
56. J.W. Bleakley, Report (loc.cit.) 1170; cf. Advertiser 22/2/29; footnote 7 and text (above).
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59. See S. D. Porteus, Social Psychology of the Australian Aborigine, Massachusetts, 1929 and The Psychology of a Primitive People, London, 1931, p. 420; Advertiser 25/5/29; Argus, 23/5/29, 28/6/29; cf. CPD vol.116 (1927) pp. 510, 515.
60. Register 30/8/28; Advertiser, 24/5/29; cf. H. Basedow, Knights of the Boomerang, p. 14.
61. M.M. Bennett, The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being, pp. 87, 97-109; cf. CPD ibid p. 810; Advertiser 22/11/28.
62. Advertiser 4/7/30.
63. M.M. Bennett, Human Rights for the Australian Aborigines, p. 14; A.O. Neville, Australia's Coloured Minority, pp. 27, 43ff; A.G. Price, What of Our Aborigines? p. 12; Conference on Aboriginal Welfare - Report, Canberra 1937; cf. Dr. D. Thomson, Recommendations of Policy in Native Affairs etc. (1937), CPP 1937-40, III, 805ff.
64. Rev. F.W. Albrecht and many Central Australians agree with me on this point.
65. By which was understood chiefly miscegenation. See N.T. Times, 9/11/28 (Rev. McGregor); Register, 9/4/26; CPD vol. 116 (1927) p. 526.

66. Advertiser 20/11/25; references in Chapter I, footnote 54.
67. See Chapters III & IV above.
68. J.B. Cleland, Anthropological Expedition to Central Australia (loc. cit.), p. 2. (separately bound.)
69. Hometer to Govres, 20/8/28; Cawood to Clemens, 4/9/28; Clemens to Cawood, 21/9/28; Cawood to Clemens 25/10/28; Clemens to Cawood, 9/11/28, in File of Papers; cf. J.W. Bleakley, Report (loc. cit.) p. 36 (separately bound).
70. Proceedings, Exhibit 13.
71. See Chapter I, footnotes 55 & 56 and text (above); Cawood to Clemens, 30/8/28 in File of Papers.
72. ibid; Govres to Hometer, 11/10/28; Cawood to Clemens 7/12/28 (forwarding the certificate) in File of Papers.
73. See Inquests by V. G. Carrington 12/1/29, 13/1/29, 19/1/29 in File of Papers. Naturally enough, 'on view of the body.....then and there lying dead' was always deleted from the forms on which the depositions were made.
74. See File of Papers, passim. Fortunately, the Department of Home and Territories sometimes dated incoming despatches upon receipt.
75. Marr 2/4/27 - 24/2/28; Howse 24/2/28 - 29/11/28; Abbott 29/11/28 - 22/10/29: see Australian Encyclopedia (1958), 'Commonwealth Ministries'.
76. See, e.g., 'Notes made by the Home Department', 23/11/28, in File of Papers: Morton was conveyed to a non-existent 'medical mission' at a non-existent 'Ti-tree Creek'.
77. Clemens to Howse, 13/11/28; Howse to Pockley, 18/11/28, in File of Papers.
78. See File of Papers.
79. Register 24/1/29; cf. Register 6/12/28; CPD vol. 119 (1928) p. 6536.
80. Argus 9/2/29.
81. 'Notes made by the Home Department', 23/11/28, in File of Papers.
82. CPD, vol. 116 (1927) p. 524.

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### EPILOGUE.

There was too much apathy and bungling on the part of the Government to allow anyone truthfully to make the claim that the Lander ructions were inevitable.

Edgar, before learning of the Coniston killings, had prophesied that clashes were the likely result of 'leaving the black man alone'<sup>(1)</sup>, which was indeed the policy of the Government.

When Australia was colonized it was the first time in History that a society was so suddenly brought into contact with a civilization so widely different from itself, a society all but cut off from contact for so long and in which contact had not been a creative force.<sup>(2)</sup> The aborigines refuse to be 'civilized' in the proper sense of the word until a definite and acceptable faith is presented to them.<sup>(3)</sup> Like the Chinese for 100 years before 1949 they must remain spiritually restless and without satisfying 'sit down places' until this is done. But Westerners who have been brought up in a society whose unifying philosophy has been gradually undermined for centuries cannot and could not understand the inacceptability of their loose credo for the aborigine who had lost a self-contained view of the world, a faith. In 1928 a Government of a society without a faith was handling a people who had lost theirs. It was the policy of the Government also to 'leave the settlers alone' to develop the country. Consequently there was a general resignation to the status quo and

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(4)  
to punitive expeditions as mere repetition of history.  
Remote control by a 'democratic' Government proved to be entirely inadequate to the situation. It is a system which requires incidents like the Coniston killings to rouse public opinion before anything is done and which causes men in high places dishonestly to conceal the results of their apathy.

The human agent need not be as weak as this.

But who is to make it strong? The intellectuals - the philosopher, the scientist, the poet, the historian - can do their part. For too long the scientist has fossicked for often valueless data instead of devoting himself to working out schemes for the aborigines' betterment; for too long the poet has neglected to do anything but sob over dead or dying black bodies; and for too long has the historian been unwilling to exploit the ugly incidents of the past in the interests of the future, being resigned to them and forgetting that with the passage of time the way in which black meets white in Australia will loom larger, become a great theme in Australian history. It is for the intellectuals to work for a belief on the direction of society which may inspire the people and the State to prevent the white man from playing dingo to the aborigines' kangaroo and fate from playing dingo to all men.

(5)  
The values of our society,<sup>(6)</sup> so often lacking in



purpose and having no common goal, were chiefly responsible for the absence of a definite Governmental policy and control of Central Australian affairs in 1928. Had they been present the clashes need not have occurred - peace could have been preserved in the teeth of the drought.

With this in view I have deliberately and severely criticized the Coniston killings and the way in which they were handled. Using the same sources of information a settler might just as easily have glorified them for making the country safe for the white man. I have judged them by the standards of my 'vision', measuring them always against that.

EPILOGUE.

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1. Register 30/8/28.
2. There was a precedent in the colonization of America but the differences between aborigine and white there were not quite so great.
3. It is significant that many, if not most, eminent (from the white man's point of view) Australian aborigines have accepted the Christian religion as taught to them by some Mission.
4. cf. C.H. Noblet, 'Report re Natives killed by Police Party', 8/12/28; Cawood to Clemens, 25/10/28, in File of Papers.
5. V. Buckley in Meanjin No. 1, 1960.
6. cf. Register 17/11/28 (J.C. Genders); Register 12/9/28 (Ed.).

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The following list of sources is meant to act chiefly as a guide not to what to read for further information and in order to see for oneself - though the writer believes that this should, where possible, be the function of a bibliography - but to what the author has read. To make the former its chief purpose would be to assume greater dexterity with and swiftness among sources than the author possesses.

### Classification:-

#### I. Primary Sources

- (a) Official and Semi-official Documents.
- (b) Newspapers.
- (c) Articles, Pamphlets etc.
- (d) Books.
- (e) Persons Interviewed and/or Corresponded with.

#### II. Secondary Sources

- (a) Articles, Journals, Pamphlets etc.
- (b) Books.

#### III. Works used for Purposes of Comparison and General Reference.

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PERSONS INTERVIEWED AND/OR CORRESPONDED WITH

Albrecht, Rev. F.W.,	Alice Springs.
Barclay, H.C.,	Director of Lands, Darwin.
Bowman, B.,	Coniston Station.
Braitling, Mrs. D.R.,	Mount Doreen Station.
Duguid, Rev. Chas.,	Adelaide.
Fleming, Rev. T.,	Yuendumu.

Hamlyn, Mr. and Mrs. J.,      Ti-tree Well Station.

Harney, W.E.,                      Ayers Rock.

Heffernan, Mr. and Mrs. W.,      Ti-tree Well Station.

Hill, Ernestine.

Maclean, I.,                      Chief Archivist, Commonwealth  
National Library, Canberra.

Mountford, C.P.,                  Adelaide.

Murray, W.G.,                      Adelaide.

Stafford, R.B.,                      Adelaide.

Scherer, Rev. P. A.,              Hermannsburg.

Strehlow, T.G.H.,                  Adelaide.

Terry, M.,                          Terrigal (N.S.W.)

Tindale, N.B.,                      Adelaide.

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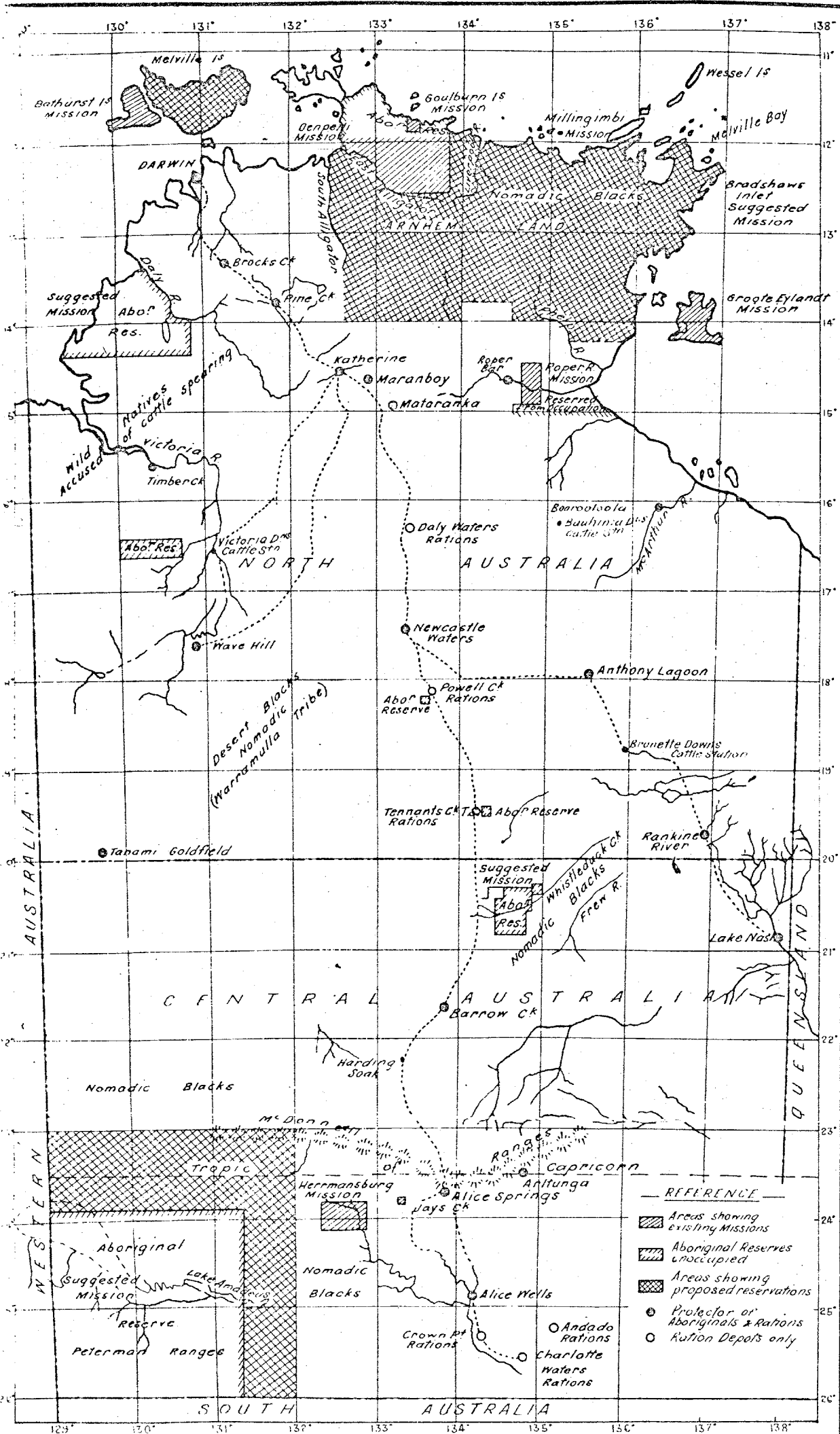
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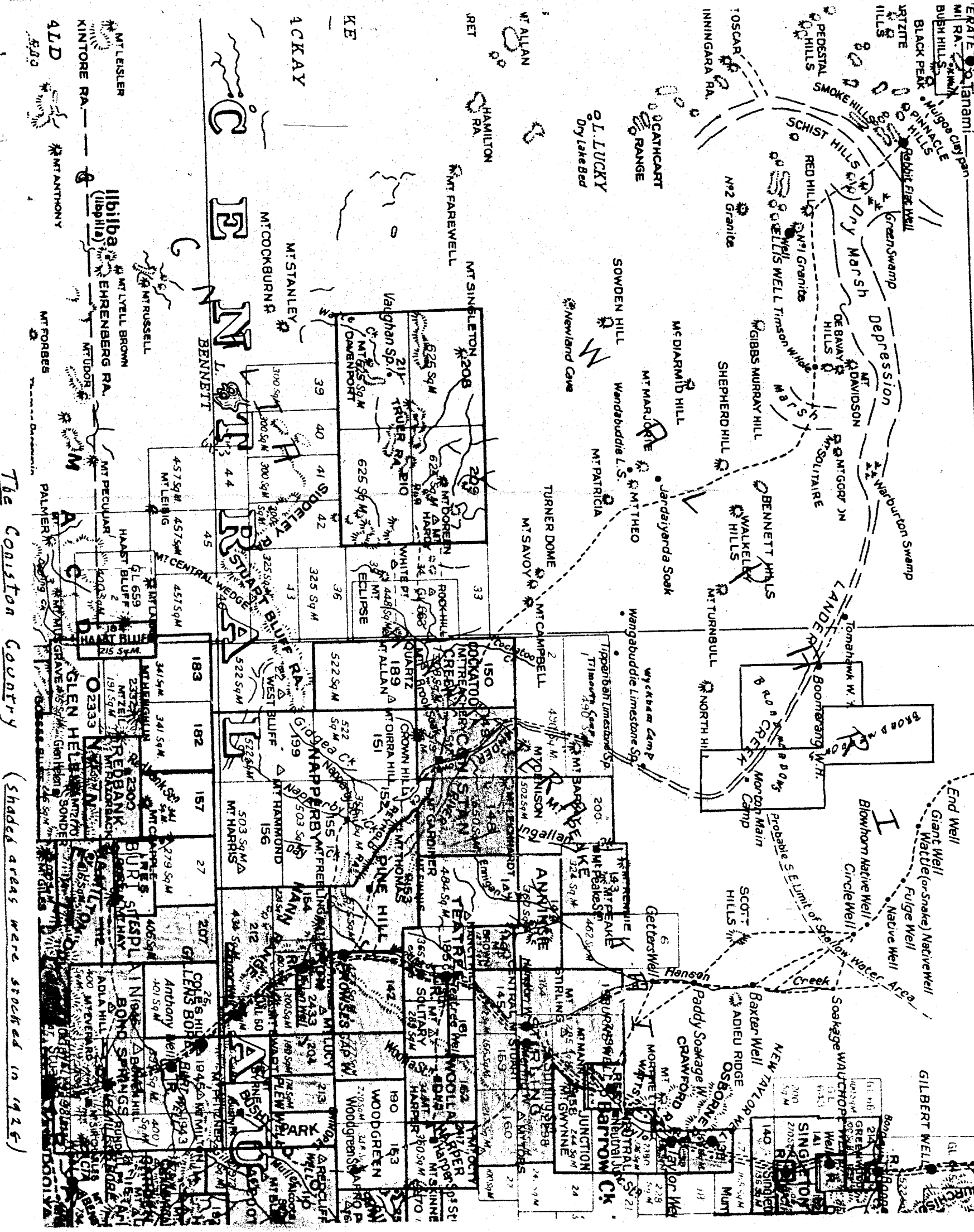




REFERENCE

	Areas showing existing Missions
	Aboriginal Reserves unoccupied
	Areas showing proposed reservations
	Protector or Aboriginals & Rations
	Ration Depots only

COMMONAGE  
TANAMI RESERVE



From H. E. C. Robinson's  
Map of the Northern Territory showing  
Pastoral Settlements, etc.,  
1933

The Coniston Country (Shaded areas were stocked in 1925)