

Inquiry's Scope Criticised Need to Cover Wider Field Board Sits at Alice Springs Monday Justice for Natives

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NEW CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS ARRIVES

Mr. G. J. Rodger To Begin Duties This Week

EFFECT OF N.S.W. PLANS ON SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Youths For Camps

The newly-appointed Conservator of Forests (Mr. G. J. Rodger) arrived in Adelaide from Sydney yesterday, and will take up his duties in a few days. Yesterday he met Mr. W. J. Wainwright, the only other member of the Forestry Board in the city, and the acting conservator (Mr. R. E. Brown). Later, he will confer with the Acting Minister of Forestation (Mr. McIntosh).

Mr. Rodger, who is 40, is a South Australian having been born at Kensington. He is the eldest son of Mr. J. and Mrs. J. Rodger, of Dulwich. Mr. Rodger had forestry experience in South Australia before the war. Since then he has widened his experience through appraisement in Great Britain, New South Wales, Western Australia, Federal Capital Territory and Tasmania.

"Forestry conditions in South Australia have changed since I worked here," said Mr. Rodger last night. "It will be one of my first tasks to inspect the State's forests and the afforestation work now in hand."

Mr. Rodger's last post was chief officer of the New South Wales Forestry Commission. In that State, he said, about 4,000 acres of softwoods, mainly pine radiata, are planted annually. In the higher regions, pinus ponderosa and pinus arida were being planted, as these types were more suitable for the colder climates.

Not Competitor With S.A.

"At its present rate of planting, New South Wales is never likely to be a competitor with South Australia in the marketing of softwood timber from the pinus radiata forests," added Mr. Rodger. "That State is not planting softwoods for its own timber requirements. Its oldest radiata pines are 16 years, and the only trees of this kind being milled at present are the thinnings from the forests."

"In addition, the policy of the present Minister in charge of forests in New South Wales appears to be in favor of a reduction of the softwood planting programme in that State. This policy, if carried out, will benefit South Australia. The Minister prefers to increase expenditure on the State's great natural hardwood forests by the provision of better fire protection and roads. By these means and the destruction of useless types of trees and undergrowth, the natural forests are helped to regenerate themselves."

"Here in South Australia there are no natural forests of value. That is why the State has always been in the forefront of the States of the Commonwealth as far as technical afforestation is concerned."

Mr. Rodger will have an opportunity, probably next month, to confer with foresters from different parts of the State. The Minister of Afforestation (Mr. Ritchie) announced that a conference would be held this month, but it has been temporarily postponed.

Youths To Be Chosen Today

Another matter which will soon engage the attention of Mr. Rodger is the establishment of forestry camps for youths as an employment scheme. The acting conservator (Mr. Brown) who has had charge of the arrangements, announced yesterday that 100 youths were chosen at the Labor Exchange today for the camps, which will be located at Penola, Mount Crawford and Mount Burr. About 120 applications from youths between 16 and 19 had been received, added Mr. Brown, 50 of whom would be sent to Penola. The remaining 50 will be divided between the other two camps.

"The Penola camp is now ready," said Mr. Brown. "It is located in the forest on the Mount Gambier-Penola road, about 15 miles from Penola. The site will have to be worked hard at pruning and thinning pines, but they should have a good time and enjoy the outdoor life. They will live in cubicles, which will have to be made, and a dining and recreation room, 75 ft. by 25 ft., has been built, in which they will have three meals a day. There will be enough of them to have organised sport at week-ends and on summer evenings. Probably plans will be made for occasional concerts and other entertainments."

"The Mount Crawford and Mount Burr camps are not yet ready, but it is expected that the contingent for the Penola camp will be there in about a week."

ALICE SPRINGS TODAY

"No Longer Isolated Centre"

By DR. C. T. MADIGAN

ALICE SPRINGS, May 27. Alice Springs is losing its old glamor as the isolated centre of the continent. The sense of remoteness is gone; the old timers have mostly faded away; the old order has changed and given place to new; the place has become too civilised and ordinary. Last night I heard wireless greetings being shouted from several houses as I passed—they like it loud up here—and there are two planes at the aerodrome. I felt so civilised that Bill Kelly and I went to church. There was one other member of the congregation, a sister from the hotel.

The North Australia geological survey party, under Mr. H. Hoofield, an Adelaide geologist, graduate, is looking over the old goldfields in the Eastern MacDonnells. His Air Force plane is at Alice Springs. Bendigo Gold Mines are sending one of their young American geologists to Tennant's Creek, and he is here with an aeroplane. Mr. C. H. Chapman, of the Granites, is here, busy organising a bowling club.

The "Aborigines' Enquiry Board," under the chairmanship of Professor J. G. Cleland, opened the proceedings today by reading the instrument signed by the Governor-General appointing the board to inquire into the race. It is no general enquiry into the treatment of aborigines in this country.

The chairman appealed to all who could give information bearing on the questions to give their names to the secretary. The enquiry then proceeded in camera. The day was spent in the "rumble" of the natives, serving a sentence for killing Kalman, another aborigine. Further witnesses will be heard in Alice Springs. A party will then proceed south-west to Middleton Ponds and Tempe Downs by car, and then probably to Ayer's Rock first. Proceedings will last at least three weeks.

Waterless Country

My arrangements are complete to start out on Tuesday with the utility truck, driven by Lou Bailey, and Kaddy, and my boy, a black boy from Hückitta station who may know the waters to the east from Hückitta. I will visit Jervois Ranges, Ben Coyer's Pillars, Tarlton Ranges, and across to Tolmeroy station, on the Queensland border, then south down to the Jervois Ranges, and return. No geologist has been sent of the Jervois Ranges, and the country is known to few.

There is no water here. There is often no water there, but Ben Webb of Mount Riddick reports rains recorded in the direction. The thing is able to spend in the country depends on whether water can be found to camp on. If there is no water then I will go to the Jervois Ranges, through. I have heard various reports of auriferous country out there, but prospecting is very difficult, owing to the lack of water. The country is unoccupied, and has at the north end the Simpson Desert, which I covered by car in 1929. I shall travel about 1,000 miles.

As to pastoral conditions, things seem normal, and good conditions really do not vary much; it is only a question whether it is the end of the last drought, or the beginning of the next. The custom of referring to the present time as a drought is an effect of the life-long optimism of the great-hearted people of the north.

While much interest is being displayed in South Australia in the forthcoming inquiry into the alleged ill-treatment of aborigines in Central Australia, there is general disappointment at the restricted scope of the investigation, and the decision to conduct the proceedings in private.

Prof. J. B. Cleland, of the Adelaide University, who is chairman of the board of inquiry, and the Rev. J. H. Sexton, secretary of the Aborigines' Friends Association, South Australia, a member, arrived today at Alice Springs, where the inquiry will begin on Monday. The Federal Acting Chief Protector of Aborigines (Mr. White) is the other member.

He is reported to have said in Melbourne recently that the most common charge against aborigines was of being unlawfully in possession of meat. Their game had been chased away, and when they killed cattle to save themselves from starvation they were imprisoned.

Under Dr. Duguid's leadership, the Presbyterian Church Council has formed a committee to consider the establishment of a medical mission in the north-west corner of South Australia, where 21,900 square miles of country was in 1921 proclaimed a reserve for aborigines, adjoining land of equal area in Western Australia and Central Australia dedicated for the same purpose. Dr. Duguid has offered

to give £100 for three years towards the cost of the mission.

When the Commonwealth and South Australian, and West Australian Governments combined to establish a large reserve, it was hoped that the dwindling native tribes would be concentrated there.

Some parts of the country are well watered and carry an abundance of native game. Every effort has been made to keep white men out of the territory. Permits are granted under certain conditions, but mining prospectors are definitely banned.

Among high authorities in South Australia it is felt that the concentration of full-blooded aborigines in reserves of this kind is the most practical method of dealing with them.

As for the half-caste problem, there is much support for a policy of gradual absorption into the white community. Schemes are now being developed by interested bodies on these lines.

As is expected, they are officially recognised. It is probable that at a future Premiers' Conference an effort will be made to obtain the cooperation of the Commonwealth and the other States.

PROF. CLELAND

is a strong point with the modernists of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia (Dr. C. Duguid), who believes that there is no hope of obtaining justice for the aborigine under present conditions.

So many sensational statements have been made recently about the treatment of aborigines that there is a strong public feeling that the Commonwealth Government should have granted a full and open inquiry, embracing not only specific charges of cruelty, but the treatment of the natives generally, the conduct of missions, the health of the aborigines, and the half-caste problem.

One Result

It is felt, however, that one valuable result of the present move may be some attempt to devise a more satisfactory system for meeting out justice

Board Arrives At Alice Springs

ALICE SPRINGS, Saturday.—All Alice Springs was at the railway station tonight to see members of the board of inquiry. They were met by Mr. V. White (protector of aborigines) and Dr. Hiley, the medical officer.

Constable McKinnon, who has been relieving Constable Kennel at Charlotte Waters, will arrive at Alice Springs tonight. Posters have been placed asking any person with evidence bearing on the proceedings to place it before the court.

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