

Roebourne  
Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> /92

The Secretary  
Ab. Protection Board  
Sir

I have the honour to inform you for the information of your Board of my return to Roebourne on the 20 Inst, from tour of Tableland.

Under separate cover please find detail reports on following Stations which I have visited and inspected

Croydon owned by WK McRae and co

Mt Florence owned by Robinson and sons

Cooya Pooya owned by Lockyer Bros

Mulga Downs owned by Lockyer Bros

Hamersley owned by McRae and Thompson

Middle Creek and Springs owned by Stevenson and Pollett

Millstream owned by Padbury and Loten [?]

Since my return to Roebourne I have written these Reports from notes taken at the different Stations. I have written on the various matters affecting the natives precisely as I have seen them and with an endeavour to be strictly impartial. I intend to draw up a general summarised Report of the whole tour and will forward per next Steamer. I had hoped to have got it away by this boat together with these detail Reports but find the Steamer leaves sooner than I expected.

So far as I understand your instructions of the 21<sup>st</sup> Sept your Board wish for Reports similar to these forwarded but I shall be happy if you can offer any suggestion by way of improvement.

I have the honour to be

Sir

Your obedient servant

Chas M Straker<sup>1</sup>

P. S. I should be glad if you obtain and forward to me a foolscap page Letter Book to enable me to copy my letters.

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<sup>1</sup> Acc 495, File 726/92, Straker, C. Report on Ashburton Downs Station, November 1892, SROWA. Charles Straker was a travelling inspector of Aborigines. He eventually came to own Hamersley and Coolawanyah Stations (Battye 1915, 219).

## Extracts from Station Reports by C M Straker, November 1892

### 726/02 Mulga Downs Station, Tableland

**Arrival** - I arrived from Mt Florence Station on the 29<sup>th</sup> October and proceeded to visit the natives at their different camps.

**Ownership situation** - The station is owned by Lockyer Bros and is situated about two hundred miles from Roebourne inland in a South Easterly direction and is the farrest out of any Station this way.

**Manager** - Mr Reginald Hester is the Manager. The following number of natives employed on this Station

<b>Number of natives employed -</b>	Males of all ages above 5 years -	20
	Females	- 16
	Children under 5 years	<u>8</u>
		<u>44</u>

**Clothing** - The house boys and indeed all the more civilised natives well clothed but I noticed that amongst the shepherds and water drawers clothing was conspicuous by its absence. I called Mr Hesters attention to this fact and told him that in all cases where natives are employed your Board expect them to be decently clad. He told me he would see it was done in the future and explained that the natives whom I saw without clothes were some who had but recently come in from the hills and had not had clothes given them, while others had received clothes but had given them away to bush natives. Before I left the Station I saw clothes sent out to all these natives.

**Length of time natives in this employ** - Originally this was a small station owned by Leski and McRae but some few years ago it was bought by the present owners and a great extent more country taken up and added to it. Some few of the natives here were in the service of the former owners and remained on with Lockyer Bros when that firm bought the Station. Since then a good number of natives have come in from the Range and entered the service of Lockyer Bros. Mr Hester says he has gone out and seen natives and asked them to come in but most emphatically denies having at any time brought natives against their which indeed here it would be impossible to keep natives against their inclination as they could any time within a few hours get into the Hamersley Range where it is next to impossible to catch them if they wish to avoid being caught. Some of the natives who have been asked to come in have refused to do so as they preferred their free bush life, but as a rule they have been glad to come and Mr Hester says he could at any time go out or send word by other natives and he could get numbers more to come in.



**Conduct** - There is little or no complaint made by the Manager regarding the conduct of the natives employed on the Station. Formerly some of the shepherds took to killing sheep, probably being persuaded into doing so by some of the bush natives. These offenders were arrested and prosecuted and since then there has been no trouble of that kind. Being so far away from town and there being such long intervals between the visit from the police Mr Hester says he has often had to chastise natives himself but on no account allows any abuse and I am sure from my own observation Mr Hester is a kind and humane master and as such the natives themselves speak of him. The source of trouble here is from hill natives coming in and leading the Station natives into mischief.

**Trouble from hill natives** - From time to time natives from the Hamersley Range come in and give a great deal of trouble. Last year a large number of both sheep and cattle were killed by these blacks and they cause a lot of trouble by coming and loafing on the shepherds as they consume their rations and lead them into all sorts of mischief. There have been several warrants taken out for the chief offenders and Mr Hester complains that no attempt is made to arrest these men. There are a large number of bush native in the Range up this way. Some time ago forty came into the station with the avowed intention of killing all the white men, they succeeded in spearing one China man and also in breaking both his arms and would doubtless have killed him but they were disturbed. Just lately they have sent in a message to the effect that shortly they would come in and kill all the white men and native men and take away the women. This sort of thing upsets the natives who are at work very much, and it also makes the Chinamen much afraid. Mr Hester is very anxious that a constable should be stationed upon the Tableland and patrol all this part as the bush native can only be kept in subjection by this means.

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#### **Hamersley Station, Tableland**

**Owners** - This station is owned by McRae and Thompson and managed by Mr Guy Thompson

**Number of natives employed** - There are only a few natives at work here. The numbers are as follows. Males all ages over 5 years - 6; Females - 7; Children - 2. Total - 15.

**Conduct** - Mr Thompson has little complaint to make with regard to the natives he employs. He pointed out to me one native who had received a flogging ordered by Mr Keep when that gentleman visited the Hamersley to witness the execution of Coppin's murderer. Mr Thompson says the effect was most salutary and since then this native has ceased to steal. A habit to which he was much given and for which he was sentenced to be flogged.

From time to time there is trouble from the shepherds been led astray by bush men and once or twice shepherds have absconded. At the present time one is away and a warrant has been issued for his arrest.

**Health** – The natives here are all looking the picture of health and Mr Thompson says that with the exception of a[n] odd case of venereal disease sickness is unknown. This disease is acquired by bush natives coming in and having intercourse with the Station natives.

**Bush natives** - Within and about the Hamersley Range there are a large number of bush natives who refuse to work for any master. When Mr Thompson first bought the Hamersley Station he tried to induce some of these bushmen to come in and settle with him. On two or three different occasions a number of them came in and were fed and supplied with clothes and sent out with other civilised natives to be taught to shepherd. They would remain a week or fortnight and get fat and then without cause what ever except their disinclination for work they would clear out. Mr Thompson tried this so often that at last he got disgusted and had ceased to try and civilise any of these people and now refuses to allow them to camp on the 'runs' or at any of the waterholes so far as he can avoid doing so.

I told him he must not drive the natives away from water holes and he replied that it is impossible to permit them to hang about as they are perpetually robbing huts and committing all sorts of thefts. Mr Thompson says that with the exception of a few sheep he does not think they have killed much of his stock but they scare his shepherds and steal so much from them that makes him so indignant against them. Out of the whole tribe of hill natives here Mr Thompson has only succeeded in civilising one native and his woman. This native has now been shepherding for some five years having a holiday when he desires one. During the whole period of service he has only absconded once and then returned of his own accord after a time. Mr Thompson says he has gone out and brought in some of the younger natives thinking that they might take to the place and work but the parents always come in and remove them at night. This tribe of natives are not stationary in the Range but travel to and fro between that part and the Upper Ashburton and belong to the same people who sometime ago murdered the half-caste Coppin. Warrants have been taken out for some of the ringleaders but Mr Thompson complains that no effort is made by the police to arrest these offenders.

He would much like to see a police patrol as he thinks that the most effective method of keeping these blacks in order.

**Venereal disease amongst hill natives** – Mr Thompson gives a most woeful account of the state of these natives from venereal disease. To use his own words he says "They are simply rotten". He has on several occasions brought them in to the Station and attended to them but



they will not stay and as soon as they get a little better clear out. The only way to cure them would be to have them brought in by compulsion and forcible retained until they got well for if they can get away they will not remain and receive treatment if it is in the least painful.

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### **Middle Creek Tableland**

**Arrival** – arrived from Hamersley station on the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup> October.

**Owner** – The Station is owned by Stevenson and Pollett and managed by Mr John Pollett.

**Situation** – These ‘runs’ are on the Tableland and a distance from Roebourne of about ninety miles.

**Number of natives employed** – The number and sexes of natives employed here is as follows.

Males over 5 years of age – 11;

Females over 5 years – 18;

Children under 5 years – 3;

32.

The circumstance of there being more women than men on the Station is accounted for in this way – Three years ago five natives from this Station were sentenced to imprisonment at Rottneest for murder and their women remained on the place and have been fed and looked after.

**Employment** – The ‘runs’ here are unfenced so most of the older natives and their women are shepherding. The others are occupied on ordinary Station work. The women are cutting grass, lamb minding and such work.

**Condition of natives** – Whilst here I have an excellent opportunity of seeing the feeling which exists between the manager and the natives he employs. All agreements had expired some three months ago so Mr Pollett asked me to sign to the natives again. I did so but gave them clearly to understand they were quite at liberty to decline to sign or to stay on the Station but with one accord they came up and were eager to make the agreement and I am perfectly certain they fully understood the nature of the agreement which they were entering upon.

**Mortality** – There has been during the last ten years six deaths amongst adult natives and two children, one full blood native and one half-caste have died. Of the adults one was murdered one died from consumption and the other four were decrepit aged natives who died from natural causes.

**Hill natives** – Here on Middle Creek Mr Pollett has no trouble from outside natives but his firm own a Station adjoining McRae and Thompson beyond the Hamersley Ranges and there

these hill men give endless trouble and are a great nuisance. They not only kill his cattle wholesale but have murdered one of his stockmen (Coppin) some time ago and have repeatedly come into the camp with the expressed intention of killing all the white men. The Stockmen never leave the camp without fire arms and a white man has to be paid high wages simply to stay at the camp to keep the natives away. Mr Pollett says they have killed scores of his cattle. Fifteen he recently found at one water hole killed and just a small portion cut out and eaten. From ten different bullocks he has cut out spears and a shear blade out of a bull. One valuable carthorse came in a while ago speared in three places but with a lot of trouble he managed to save him. Mr Pollett complains very much that the police are so seldom sent out there and says these natives who roam about from this part of the Upper Ashburton have little fear of police and fancy they can do this sort of thing with impunity. These are the same tribe of natives about whom Mr Thompson complains. Pollett has tried to induce them to come in and work but they will not do so.



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Thulea Woom Station  
Tabledand.

Arrival -

I arrived here from Pt. Florence Station on the 29<sup>th</sup> October & proceeded to visit the natives at their different camps.

Ownership -

This Station is owned by Lockyer Bros

Situation -

It is situated about two hundred & twenty miles from Portbourne island in a South Easterly direction & is the farthest out of any Station this way.

Manager -

Mt Reginald Heale is the Manager.

Number of natives

The following numbers of natives are employed on this Station

employed.

Males of all ages above 5 years	20
Females	16
Children under 5 years	87

Employment

In company with Mt Heale I have been out over the runs & seen the natives at their different work. They are occupied at the usual St<sup>n</sup> work, shepherding, stock hunting, Bullock driving & water drawing being at the present time the work upon which they are mostly engaged. The work of course varies at different periods of the year, & at times many natives are merely well sinking & other Station work of a similar nature. The practice here is to keep all the natives on the place at regular steady work.

Food

The Stockhunters, bullock drivers & all natives who work from the homestead are fed

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fed from the house & receive bread meat  
& good sweetened tea, the outside  
natives shepherds & ca are rationed &  
receive 1 lb flour, 1 1/2 lb meat each individual  
per day, with 2 lbs sugar 1/4 lb tea &  
a stick of tobacco once a week. I saw  
the house natives fed & ration put up  
for the outside division & am quite  
satisfied the quantity & quality left  
nothing to be desired.

### Clothing

The house boys & indeed all the more  
civilized natives were clothed but I noticed  
that amongst the shepherds & water carriers  
clothing was conspicuous by its absence.  
I called Mr. Hester's attention to this fact  
& told him that in all cases where natives  
are employed your Board expect them  
to be decently clad. He told me he would  
see it was done in the future & explained  
that the natives whom I saw without  
clothes were some who had but recently  
come in from the hills & had not  
had clothes given them, while others had  
received clothes but had given them  
away to bush natives. Before I left  
the station I saw clothes sent out to all  
these natives.

### Agreements

All natives here are working under  
the usual twelve months agreement  
& none receive money payment.

### Holidays

During the year all natives are allowed to  
have a holiday if they wish, but many of  
them don't care to go away. The Manager  
tells me that last year after the rain he would  
have



have been glad to let nearly the whole lot go away for two or three months but they did not care to do so & so were allowed to remain.

Length of  
time natives  
in this employ.

Originally this was a small station owned by Hester & McKee but some few years ago it was bought by the present owners & a great extent more country taken up & added to it. Some few of the natives here were in the service of the former owners & remained on with Lockyer Bros. when that firm bought the station. Since then a good number of natives have come in from the Range & entered the service of Lockyer Bros. But Hester says he has gone out & seen natives & asked them to come in but most emphatically denies having at any time brought natives against their wish. Indeed here it would be impossible to keep natives against their inclination as they could any time within a few hours get into the Mammoth Range where it is next to impossible to catch them if they wish to avoid being caught.

Some of the natives who have been asked to come in have refused to do so as they preferred their free bush life, but as a rule they have been glad to come & Mr Hester says he could at any time go out & send work by other natives & he could get numbers more to come in.

Conduct

There is little or no complaint made by the Manager regarding the conduct of the



The natives employed on the Station  
Harmusky some of the shepherds took to  
killing sheep. probably very persuaded  
into doing so by some of the bush natives  
These offenders were arrested & prosecuted  
& since then there has been no trouble of  
that kind. Being so far away from  
Acon & there being such long intervals between  
the visits from the police Mr Hesk  
says he has often had to chastise natives  
himself but on no account allows any  
abuse. & I am sure from my own observation  
that Hesk is a kind & humane master  
& as such the natives don't <sup>ever</sup> speak of him  
The chief source of trouble <sup>now</sup> is from  
hill natives coming in & leading the  
Station natives into mischief.

Supervision— Besides Mr Hesk there are three white  
men employed on this Station & they are  
mostly occupied working with or look  
after the natives.

Health.— The health of the natives is just  
rate. Four or three cases of venereal disease  
have occurred but none exists on the  
place at present. Mr Hesk considers it  
very easily cured if taken in its early  
stages.

Mortality— Only two deaths have occurred here  
since the place has been settled & in  
both cases they were decrepit aged natives  
who died.

Trouble from hill natives— From time to time natives from the  
Harmusky Range come in & give a great  
deal of trouble. Last year a large number  
of



of both sheep & cattle were killed by these blacks & they cause a lot of trouble by coming & loafing on the shepherds as they consume their rations & lead them into all sorts of mischief. There have been several warrants taken out for the chief offenders & Mr Hester complains that no attempt is made to arrest these men. There are a large number of bush natives in the Range up this way. Some time ago forty came into the Station with the avowed intention of killing all the white men. They succeeded in spearing one China man & also in breaking both his arms & would doubtless have killed him but they were disturbed. Just lately they have sent in a message to the effect that shortly they would come in & kill all the white men & native men & take away the women. This sort of thing upsets the natives who are at work very much, & it also makes the Chinamen much afraid. Mr Hester is very anxious that a Constable should be stationed upon the Tableland & patrol all this part as the bush natives can only be kept in subjection by this means.



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# Hamursley Station Labland.

Owners.— This Station is owned by Mr Rice & Thompson & Managed by Mr Guy Thompson

Situation.— It is situated inland from Portbaine about one hundred & fifty miles & on the South side of the Hamursley Range.

Number of natives employed.— There are only a few natives at work here. The numbers are as follows.

Males all ages over 15 yrs	6
Females	7
Children	2

15

Employment.— These natives are occupied as usual on the Station. Fencing, water drawing & shepherding.

Food.— The natives at work away from the homestead. Shepherds & water drawers, are rationed twice a week. Those about the house are fed there three times a day. All hands receive a liberal supply of meat, flour, tea sugar & tobacco & are in no way stinted.

Clothing.— There is no fault to be found in this matter. I saw all the natives with the exception of one shepherd & his woman & they were well & suitably clothed. They all had good blankets.

Conduct.— Mr Thompson has little complaint to make with regard to the natives he employs. He pointed out to me one native who had received a flogging ordered



ordered by Mr Deep. When that gentleman visited the Hamusley to witness the execution of Coppens murderer. Mr Thompson says the effect was most salutary & since then this native has ceased to steal, a habit to which he was much given & for which he was sentenced to be flogged.

From time to time there is trouble from the shepherds been led astray by bush men & once or twice shepherds have absconded. At the present time one is away & a warrant has been issued for his arrest.

Supervision—There are two white men employed on the Station beside Mr Thompson.

Health—The natives here are all looking the picture of health & Mr Thompson says that with the exception of a odd case of venereal disease sickness is unknown. This disease is acquired by bush natives coming in & having intercourse with the Station natives.

Bush natives—Within & about the Hamusley Range there are a large number of bush natives who refuse to work for any master. When Mr Thompson first bought the Hamusley Station he tried to induce some of these bushmen to come in & settle with him. On two or three different occasions a number of them came in & were fed & supplied with clothes & sent out with other civilised natives to be taught to shepherd. They would remain



remain a week or fortnight & get fat  
& then without any cause what ever  
except their disinclination for work,  
they would clear out. Mr Thompson  
tried this so often that at last he  
got disgusted & has ceased to try  
to civilise any of these people & now  
refused to allow them to camp on  
the 'runs' or at any of the water holes  
so far as he can avoid doing so.

I told him he must not drive the  
natives away from water holes & he  
replies that it is impossible to permit  
them to hang about as they are perpetrating  
robbing huts & committing all sorts of  
thefts. Mr Thompson says that with  
the exception of a few sheep he  
does not think they have killed  
much of his stock, but they scare  
his shepherds & steal so much from  
them that makes him so indignant  
against them. Out of the whole tribe  
of hill natives here Mr Thompson has  
only succeeded in civilising one native  
& his woman. This native has now  
been shepherding for some five years  
having a holiday when he desires one  
During the whole period of service he  
has only absconded once, & then returned  
of his own accord after a time.

Mr Thompson says he has gone out  
& brought in some of the younger  
natives thinking that they might  
take to the place & work but the



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# Middle Creek.

## Gabeland.

Arrival — Arrived here from Glamersly Station on the evening of the 12th October.

Owner — The Station is owned by Stevenson & Pollett & managed by Mr John Pollett.

Situation — These 'runs' are on the Gabeland & a distance from Portbaine of about ninety miles.

Number of natives employed — The number & sexes of natives employed here is as follows.

Maales over 5 Yrs. of age. 11  
Females. . . . . 18  
Children under . . . . . 3

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The circumstance of there being more women than men on the Stn is accounted for in this way. Three years ago five natives from this Station were sentenced to imprisonment at Portmout for murder, & their women remained on the place & have been fed & looked after.

Employment — The 'runs' here are unfenced so most of the older natives & their women are shepherding. The others are occupied in ordinary Station work. The women are cutting grass, lamb mindin, & house work.

Food — As usual the shepherds are paid for a week. & the remainder of the natives who camp at the house.

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work from there are fed three times a day on bread meat tea & sugar.

The shepherds receive rations at the rate of \$1.00 flour per week for a man & his woman with tea sugar & tobacco. The house natives also receive 1 sheet of tobacco each per week.

Clothing—

The custom is to give each native a pig out of clothes three a year, also blanket. The natives who are at hard work get extra clothing between times as they require them. I have visited nearly all the natives employed on this Station & find them well cared for & looked after.

Supervision—

Besides the manager there are two other white men employed. One camped out looking after the shepherds & a teamster.

General conduct.

Mr Pollett says he has no complaints to make as to the conduct of the natives he employs. Like all natives they make a good deal of looking after but do their work fairly well & give little trouble. He says he is compelled at times, when natives get beyond control, to administer correction but it rarely happens. He had had natives imprisoned but none are in now & all are working well & conducting themselves properly.

Condition of natives.

Whilst here I had an excellent opportunity of seeing the feeling which exists between the manager & the natives he employs. All agreements had expired



expired some three months ago, so Mr Pollett asked me to sign the natives again. I did so but gave them clearly to understand they were quite at liberty to decline to sign or to stay on the St<sup>n</sup> but with one accord they came up & were eager to make the agreement & I am perfectly certain they fully understood the nature of the agreement which they were entering upon.

Health— The health of the natives is very good. During the winter there are the usual severe colds to which natives up here are very subject & also an odd case of venereal disease but Mr Pollett tells me the latter is rare & easily grappled with. There is no sickness at present.

Mortality— There has been during the last ten years six death amongst adult natives & two children, one full blood native & one half caste have died.

Of the adults one was murdered, one died from consumption & the other four were decrepit aged natives who died from natural causes.

Natives for Rations— Mr Pollett drew my attention to four natives for whom he wished to draw rations from your Board. Two of these I declined to allow being put on the list as I considered them capable of earning their own living on the Station. The other two were old women & deserving cases & Mr Pollett will I believe apply to your Board



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Board for maintenance for them.  
kill natives — Here on Middle Creek Mr Pollett  
has no trouble from outside natives  
but his firm own a station adjoining  
Mr Rae & Thompson beyond the  
Hamusly range & there these hill  
men give endless trouble & are a  
great nuisance. They not only kill  
his cattle wholesale but have murdered  
one of his stockmen (Coppin) some  
time ago. I have repeatedly come in on  
the camp with the expressed intention  
of killing all the white men. The  
stockmen never leave the camp without  
fire arms & a white man has to be  
paid high wages simply to stay  
at the camp to keep the natives away.  
Mr Pollett says they have killed  
scores of his cattle. I think he  
recently found at one water hole killed  
I just a small portion cut out &  
eaten. From ten different bullocks  
he has cut out spears & a shear blade  
out of a bull. One valuable cart horse  
came in a while ago speared in three  
places but with a lot of trouble  
the managed to save him.

Mr Pollett complains very much that  
the police are so seldom sent out  
there & says these natives, who roam  
about from this part to the Upper  
Ashburton have little fear of police  
& fancy they can do this sort of thing  
with impunity. These are the same  
tribe



tribe of native about whom Mr Thompson  
complains. Pollett has tried to induce  
them to come in & work but they will  
not do so.

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