

Isdell Diary 1909
Cons 652
Item1909/0213

Isdell_1909.0213.199

[Handwritten diary]

Wednesday, Dec 16, 1908

Arranged with footman to stay and look after my camp and I started to mount up boy and receive some rations at crossing. Left my camp at 3 a.m. travelled 45 miles, met boy coming back with packs. I returned with packs ten miles, having travelled 55 miles. Terribly hot and very tired. The police who were kindly letting me have rations to be returned from Derby were all absent in bush. Fitzroy pub and store had no supplies. Mr Green Fitzroy postmaster caring my boy was waiting for police. Kindly loaded him up from his own scanty stock and it started him out. This borrowing rations through want of sufficient horses to carry my own supplies is anything but creditable to the government. Boy got 60lbs fresh killed beef at Fossil Downs Station at 4d per lb. The hot weather, being badly salted, half went bad. What is left cost me 9d per lb – pretty stiff for meat in a cattle country.

Isdell_1909.0213.114

[Typed diary]

Diary (1) 103

Friday, Dec 18, 1908

Terribly hot, traveller looking after camp and horses during my absence. After boy started en route Halls Creek this morning, another footman, overlander from Northern Goldfields arrived in camp.

Saturday, 19th Dec

Light shower last night, terribly hot. Mr Stavenson, lately in charge of mob of mules for Gogo, started this morning for Halls Creek, after spelling his horses for a few days. Gave him mail to post, also telegram to Wyndham for supplies to be sent me Halls Creek first team, as there are no rations to be got at the Creek. Mr Richardson, owner of Pierre Creek Station, camped with me last night, informed me no natives down from the hills yet, not sufficient rain.

Sunday, 20th Dec

Mr Richardson left for home. I rode out to Louisa River, slightly running, no signs of natives. Will shift camp, too many hard up travellers calling at present camp, my rations won't run it.

Monday, 21st Dec

Got everything ready to shift, but rain setting in did not do so. Went down creek about 3 miles with boy, and picked out and fixed up camp. Flies and mosquitoes are very bad.

Tuesday, 22nd Dec

Shifted camp this morning close to Louisa, good feed and water. Three of my horses very bad backs, have to dress them every day, flies keep them bad, no medicines to keep them off. Give them three weeks here, by that time there ought to be feed and water ahead.

Wednesday, Dec 23

Doing various repairs, very warm, no sign of rain.

Thursday, Dec 24

Doing repairs

Friday, Dec 25

Started boy with pack to Louisa Downs for meat, 40 miles, none in camp. Lonely miserable Christmas Day, damper and tea.

Isdell_1909.0213.113

[Typed diary]

Diary (2) 104

Saturday, Dec 26

Ten mile walk after horses. Saw tracks five natives on river. Very poor lonely Boxing Day.

Sunday, Dec 27

Mr Cox, Louisa Downs Station called at camp, en route for Fossil Downs with packs for rations.

Met boy told him to get meat at station. Mr Cox informs me no possible chance of getting rations at Halls Creek nor at any of the stations. All the latter pack their supplies and will not sell any. Good job I telegraphed to Wyndham.

Monday, Dec 28

Boy returned midday with meat. Both my eyes bunged up, nearly blind. Flies terrible.

Tuesday, Dec 29

Very hot. Flies are bad. Repairing saddles.

Wednesday, Dec 30

Still hot. No sign of change. Another bung eye.

Thursday, Dec 31

Very hot. Flies bad.

Friday, January 1, 1909

A very miserable New Year's Day. Read Swallow and Ariels and Jones advertisements of plum pudding and Queensland pineapples for desert, out of old paper.

Saturday, Jan 2

Drizzling rain during night. Packed up and started 8:30 AM and travelled 10 miles. Flies frightful, playing old Harry with the horses.

Sunday, Jan 3

Started 6:30 AM travelled 10 miles. Very hot, storm brewing.

Monday, Jan 4

Started raining towards this morning, tremendous thunder and vivid lightning. Did not travel, too much like rain.

Tuesday, Jan 5

Started 6 AM travel 15 miles, camped on clay pan,

Isdell_1909.0213.112

[Typed diary]

Diary (3) 105

...very hot. Flies and mosquitoes very bad.

Wednesday, Jan 6

Terrific thunderstorm and vivid lightning. Rain came down in torrents for half an hour, completely flooding my camp, but no damage done. Started 2 PM after drying things. Travelled

8 miles to Cox's Louisa Downs Homestead, a bark humpy on a stony ridge. Owner away with packs after rations. Half-caste boy in charge of camp until Cox's return.

Thursday, Jan 7

Thunderstorm on Tuesday night did not extend half a mile. Sharp shower last night. A lot of bush natives camping about at station. All look well. Mr Cox arrived home during the afternoon.

Friday, Jan 8

Shod some of my horses. Very warm.

Saturday, Jan 9

Shifted all my packs but one up to old shed at station, leaving my boy to look after them and balance of horses. Took one pack course and started across country for Richardson's Bohemia Downs Station, travelling 20 miles over very rough country. No pad or track to follow.

Sunday, Jan 10

Started 5:30a.m. travelled 20 miles over exceedingly rough hilly country. Very warm. Saw no signs of natives. My horse Ballarat knocked up with me, and will have a job to get back.

Monday, Jan 11

Started 6a.m. travelled 9 miles and located Richardson's homestead, situated in the midst of rough limestone hills. Richardson absent and bullock driver looking after place. Terribly warm. Bohemia Downs Station. Richardson and Co owners. W Richardson Manager, 1600 cattle, worked by permit. Permanent staff four men and five women, one half-caste boy Albert Griffith, from Derby on agreement. One half-caste boy five years old,

Isdell_1909.0213.111

[Typed diary]

Diary (4) 106

mother dead, father a Queensland half-caste, at present stock-riding for Blythe at Mount House Stn. No sickness, disease or permanent indigents. About thirty bush natives, including some very old natives, frequently visit the station, and always get food and tobacco. Saw some of the working staff, they all looked well, perfectly happy and contented. Granted a general permit to W. Richardson, and to W. Smith, teamster, who employs a few natives, also granted a gun license to Albert Griffith, half-caste.

Tuesday, Jan 12

Started on return trip 5:30 AM, with knocked up horse, travelled on foot most of day, 20 miles of country, very rough and very hot weather.

Wednesday, Jan 13

Started 4 a.m. travelled 18 miles over rough country, mostly on foot, had difficulty in getting my horse to the camp, owing to great heat. Sharp shower of rain during afternoon freshed him up, and I gave him a good bath at the camp.

Thursday, Jan 13

Started at 4:30 AM walked and drove horses 9 miles to Cox's, glad to get back, tired and weary.

Friday, Jan 15

Camping and resting knocked up horse. Can get no horses here, and do not want to leave pack saddle. Walked up to homestead and saw station natives. Well fed, clothes, happy and contented.

Louisa Downs Station. W Cox owner and manager, 3000 cattle worked by permit, permanent staff two half-caste boys over 16 years, and two natives, two women and one child. The women's husbands are in gaol for cattle killing. A large lot of bush natives get food at the station. Granted general permit to W. Cox, and gun licenses to Freddy Lyons and Martin, half-caste boys.

Saturday, Jan 16

Made fly healers, and shod balance of horses. Roan mare showing signs of Kimberley disease.

Sunday, Jan 17

Terrific wind and dust, with showers of rain...

Isdell_1909.0213.110

[Typed diary]

Diary (5) 107

... last night, started at 6 AM for Margaret River Station. Roan mare bad, going to die. Ballarat knocked up and leg weary and poor. Travelled 10 miles.

Monday, Jan 18

More wind and dust no rain last night. Started to 6 a.m. and travelled 8 miles to Margaret River Station. Roan mare done. Boy walking.

Tuesday, Jan 19

Margaret River Station. Copley and Co owners. J McCauley manager, 6000 cattle worked by permit, permanent staff four stockman and 22 women, one half-caste girl three years old, mother's name Nelly. Indigents 4 men , 24 women, one woman blind. No sickness or disease. Station staff look well and contented. Inspected large camp of natives up river, 100 all told. They were all looking well, and said they got plenty of bush tucker. Also with them about fifty mongrel dogs.

Wednesday, Jan 20

Boy's saddle mare dying of Kimberley disease. Mr McCauley offered to lend me a horse to Hall's Creek, but I bought a horse instead. Will have to buy three or four more at Hall's. Not able to carry sufficient stores with present packs. I have been borrowing and begging rations this last two months, nobody will sell any.

Thursday, Jan 21

Some of the horses away. Got late start 8 AM, travelled 10 miles. One old man and two women came to my camp, gave them a feed and tobacco. They tell me get plenty of bush food.

Friday, Jan 22

Started at 6 a.m. and travelled 15 miles to lagoon on Margaret. Met Queensland overlander with large mob of horses for sale. In afternoon one man and five women came to camp, seemed healthy and fat. They wanted some rations and tobacco, but I could not spare any. My boy shot an old man kangaroo for them. Very hot. Flies and mosquitoes bad.

Isdell_1909.0213.109

[Typed diary]

Diary (6) 108

Saturday, Jan 23

Started 5:30 a.m. and travelled 20 miles. Crossed Laura River and camped on Mary River, close to Booty's Lambo Station. No one home. House locked up. Found bush boy on river. Sent him with note to find Mr Booty. Been very little rain. Feed very poor.

Sunday, Jan 24

Mr Booty arrived midday. Lambo Station. C. Booty owner and manager, 4000 cattle, worked by permit. Staff employed two men, two women, three children. One woman, Polly, has a half-caste boy aged six years. No indigents, sickness or disease. Mr Booty kills cattle for bush natives when they visit station. Very few cattle killed by natives. Mr Booty asked me to look at his house. He had been absent three days, and the natives had taken a sheet of iron off the roof, let themselves through and robbed the store of various things. The thieves were a deaf-and-dumb boy, and another boy at about 14 years old. He did not intend prosecuting, as he would have to go to Wyndham, a distance of 600 miles there and back. There should be a quarter sessions at Hall's Creek.

Sunday, Jan 24

One of these two boys had already committed several crimes. He robbed digger's camp, broke Booty's store a few months ago, and also is guilty of stealing a horse saddle and bridle. For none of these crimes was he prosecuted, simply because it is cheaper to lose £20 or £30 than go to Wyndham as prosecutor. Both of these boys should be removed from the district, for their own sakes. If quarter sessions had been held at Halls Creek, they would have been punished. Many similar crimes are committed, but for the above reason never come before the court.

Monday, Jan 25

Started 6 AM and travelled 18 miles to Nuggetty Gully. Found three white men working there, also three old men, three young women, two half-caste girls aged five years, mothers are...

Isdell_1909.0213.108

[Typed diary]

Diary (7) 109

... both dead, one young woman with half-caste girl aged six years, one young woman with half-caste baby girl aged nine months. These three girls should be removed to Beagle Bay. All these natives usually camp about Button's station.

Tuesday, Jan 26

Thunderstorm last night, little rain. Started 6:30 AM travelled 10 miles to Button's homestead, a miserable hovel on a stony ridge. Button absent in Halls Creek, expected home on Thursday, will have to wait to get meat. One black woman, mother of five half-castes in charge of station. A number of old men and women camped about homestead, and numerous half-caste young girls.

Wednesday, Jan 27

Mr Button expected home tomorrow. Will wait, although have only a few days supplies in bags. This morning had a visit from three old men, four old women, and no less than eight half-castes, all girls except one boy two years old. One of the women is the mother of five half-castes, three girls and two boys, one boy 17 years, one girl 14, two girls six and seven years, one boy two years; also present two girls five years old, mothers of both dead, one young gin with girl six years old Asiatic origin, one young gin baby girl nine months old. It is really a disgrace to see all these young girls being reared in a native camp, and given no chance for a better life. All

came to my camp to see the "Gubinment". They wanted some rations and tobacco, but as I am near starving myself I could give them nothing.

Thursday, Jan 28

Very hot and flies terribly bad. This morning there marched into my camp seven old men, four old women, 11 young men 20 to 35 years old, nine young women, 13 boys from 10 to 17 years of age, nine girls from 10 to 16 years old, and two babies, all to see the "Gubinment". Had a long talk. All were healthy and in good condition, with no diseases. Plenty of bush food, supplemented by an occasional beast killed for them by Mr Button. My boy shot a couple of kangaroos for them. One sensible old man, talking fair English, said too many whites about, blackfellows wanted some...

Isdell_1909.0213.107

[Typed diary]

Diary (8) 110

... country for their own use solely, where they could leave old people and women and children in safety. "Gubinment" to help them with food and tobacco, and look after them while the men were away hunting. Meat and tobacco was his principal theme. I cordially agreed with his sensible remarks. They wanted some rations and tobacco, but I had none to spare.

Friday, Jan 29

Could wait no longer for Button. Only got rations for three days outside, no meat or sugar. Started to 6:30 a.m. and travelled 16 miles over wretchedly poor country, buck spinnifex and stones. Met stock boy who told me Button had gone out another road, sent him word I would be out again as soon as rain falls.

Saturday, Jan 30

Started 6 a.m. and travelled a long stage of 25 miles, over rough poor spinnifex and stone country, not a blade of grass anywhere. Horses both terribly tucked up. Ballarat knocked up. He is very poor and sick, will leave him at Halls Creek.

Sunday, Jan 31

Started 5:30 a.m. and travelled 12 miles. Camped within a mile of Hall's Creek. Horses both terribly hollow. Have seen no grass for a week, nothing but buck spinnifex and stones. Passed Brockman's workings and hotel. Saw a lot of natives and two half-caste children about. Very hot, plenty of clouds but no rain.

Monday, Feb 1

Started 6.30 AM and travelled 3 miles and camped on Hall's Creek, Half a mile from town. No feed for horses, a little rain. Must send horses to grass.

Tuesday, Feb 2

Up to town. Got large mail. Saw R.M. and Constable Ryan sent my horses out to Racecourse, 6 miles from town, good grass and water. Horse Ballarat bad. Received wire re half-caste.

Wednesday, Feb 3

Writing and answering letters. Country in bad state want of rain.

Isdell_1909.0213.106

[Typed diary]

Diary (9) 111

Thursday, Feb 4

Bad touch of fever.

Friday, Feb 5

Laid up all day with fever

Saturday, Feb 6

Writing all day in Police Court

Sunday, Feb 7

Shifted my pack to post office.

Monday, Feb 8

Writing. Wired Colonial Treasurer re horses.

Tuesday, Feb 9

Writing report west Kimberley. Mare Gipsy taken ill.

Wednesday, Feb 10

Writing. Heavy thunderstorm. Mare Gipsy dead. Severe loss. Post-mortem disclosed Kimberly disease.

Thursday, Feb 11

Started for Ruby Plains with Mr Way, he finding horses. Travelled 9 miles.

Friday, Feb 12

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 30 miles. Camped in Sawpit Creek. Called Richards Garden on Elvire River. Aboriginal Tommy very bad case of venereal, authorise Richards to feed him 1/6 per day. Half-caste girl Minnie aged 13 years with natives on river.

Saturday, Feb 13

Horses away. Mr Way taken ill last night. I found three of the horses. Mr Oakes of Sawpit Creek Station sent horses down to shift camp to his place.

Sunday, Feb 14

Mr Way returned ill to Halls Creek. Mr Oakes proffered me horses to accompany him to Ruby Plains, started 3 PM travelled 10 miles.

Monday, Feb 15

Storm last night, everything wet. Started 8 AM a.m. travelled 18 miles to Buttons Ruby Plains Station.

Isdell_1909.0213.105

[Typed diary]

Diary (10) 112

Tuesday, Feb 16

Inspected natives at station. Two old natives, one male one female, on relief list, also two orphan half-caste girls, one old woman horribly disfigured, nose and face eaten away with lupus disease, but now healed up. Mr Button informed me that a few years ago this disease was very prevalent, and many died of it, but he knows of nine at present, it seems to have been confined almost exclusively to the Mary and Laura River tribes. Arranged with Mr Button to take six half-castes to Wyndham in his buggy, for Beagle Bay, four of his own, and two orphan girls. Large number of bush natives camped close to station. Mr Button very kind to them giving them meat and tobacco.

Ruby Plains Stn. R Button owner and manager, 1000 cattle, worked by permit, permanent staff one man, one woman, one boy, half-castes five girls five to twelve years old, one boy 14 years, one boy two years, no disease or sickness, require three blankets.

Wednesday, Feb 17

Mr Button informed me half-caste girl Ruby six years old at Mt Dockwell, boy Raymond four years old badly diseased at McPhee's Creek, boy four years old Jack Lynett at Booty's Station, girl Minnie 14 years old on Eloire River. Started 6:30 AM travelled 28 miles to Oake's Sawpit Creek Station.

Sawpit Creek Station. H. Oakes owner and manager, 400 cattle, worked by permit, permanent staff one man, one woman, one girl seven years old, no half castes, indigents, sickness or disease. Large number of bush natives camped close to the station, number of old people with them, also children, all looked fat and well. Boy arrived with horses of Mr Way's to take me to Hall's Creek.

Thursday, Feb 18

Started 7:30 a.m. travelled 25 miles, visited Esau's Eating House at Brockman's, three half-caste boys there 11 to 4 years old, arranged about sending them to Wyndham. Esau is an Afghan - cannot hold a permit. Nevertheless he is exceedingly kind to all natives, a man at his place has been teaching the three boys, also drawn relief for four old natives. Afternoon got caught...

Isdell_1909.0213.104

[Typed diary]

Diary (11) 113

... in terrific tornado of wind and rain. Had to camp, everything wet, all the creeks flooded and unswimmable, put in terribly bad time. Esau offered to supply sulky and horse and drive native Tommy from Eloire to Hall's Creek relief camp, £1 per day.

Friday, Feb 19

Put in terribly bad night, wet and miserable, got bad cold. Bought two pack horses from man camped close to me for £28, started 7:30 a.m. and travelled 8 miles to Hall's Creek. Learned on arrival that horse Ballarat died on the 13th, opened by T Watkins disclosed kidney disease. Wired department re native Tommy, horses and route.

Saturday, Feb 20

Got a very bad cold, result of wetting. Trying to get vehicle for transport of natives.

Sunday, Feb 21

Writing reports and letters for Watkins to take to Fitzroy. Feel fever coming on.

Monday, Feb 22

Down to it with bad cold and malarial fever.

Tuesday, Feb 23

Fever slightly better. Got wires re payment for horses, also instructions re collecting syphilitic natives. Sent word to Esau to bring native Tommy in from Eloire, also to Herbert to bring in horses and get paid.

Wednesday, Feb 24

Very bad with fever. Very heavy rain. Got word from Esau leaving for Eloire to bring in sick native, afraid rivers will block him.

Thursday, Feb 25

Still bad with fever, got horses in from racecourse, ready to start when weather clears. Five female witnesses against eight natives charged with cattle killing Sturt's Creek 100 miles from Hall's Creek, sent back in charge of police native Jack. He took them 2 miles out of Halls Creek, then left them to find their own way back through 50 miles of hostile country, very unfair treatment.

Isdell_1909.0213.103

[Typed diary]

Diary (12) 114

Friday, Feb 26

Fever better. Wyndham mail arrived. Shod two horses. Made hobbles. Messrs Bannerman of Sturt's Creek and Shephard in town. Cannot get a vehicle of any description to take sick natives or half-castes to Wyndham. Word received that prospector Brown, two horses and dog perished for want of water out Tanami way. Esau brought in sick native Tommy. Charged £3, paid own cheque.

Saturday, Feb 27

Shod more horses, will shift into bush Monday. Can get no stores, borrowed two bags of flour from Constable Ryan. Everything very short in Halls Creek.

Sunday, Feb 28

Shod more horses. Shift tomorrow. Inspected relief camp at native meal time this morning. Five young women discharged cured of clap.

Monday, Mar 1

Shifted from Halls Creek 3 miles to White Eloire.

Tuesday, Mar 2

Heavy rain all night and raining today.

Wednesday, Mar 3

Started to 7:30 a.m. and travelled 17 miles down Black Eloire River, very rough and boggy. Had to leave river and take to hills. Very hot.

Thursday, Mar 4

Two horses away. Started 7:30 a.m. and travelled 16 miles to Flora Valley Station, over terribly rough country. Three horses cast all their shoes.

Flora Valley Stn, Gordon and Buchanan owners, Gordon manager, 7000 cattle, worked by permit. Permanent staff six males, six females, one boy from Northern Territory, six children, one half-caste boy five years old, three indigents on government relief, no sickness or disease. Told Mr Gordon it was an imposition to charge government relief for three old natives. Did not see boys or indigents, all away. Boys get food from kitchen, their women getting rations only. Told manager all would have to be treated alike.

Isdell_1909.0213.102

[Typed diary]

Diary (13) 115

Friday, Mar 5

Started at 6 a.m. and travelled 15 miles. Camped on a small creek. Grey horse Freddy shows signs of Kimberley disease. Will sell him without authority.

Saturday, Mar 6

Started at 6 a.m. horse Bally away. Travelled 14 miles, taking a beeline across Denison Plains, very boggy, slow progress. Camped on small claypan. Boy got back with Bally 10 p.m.

Sunday, Mar 7

Very heavy rain all night. Everything wet, can a quagmire. Started 2 p.m. and travelled 8 miles on to dry camp.

Monday, Mar 8

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 16 miles. Terribly boggy, took all day. Plenty of grass and water.

Tuesday, Mar 9

Started at 6:30 a.m. and travelled 16 miles over very boggy plains. Camped at Kooringe or Seven Mile Waterhole.

Wednesday, Mar 10

Started 6 a.m. and travelled 15 miles to Sturt's Creek Station, crossed creek 7 miles from station. Creek dry, never ran. Last night first for three weeks without rain. Had difficulty in locating homestead, no road or pad. Homestead recently formed. Old homestead 40 miles down creek. Manager Bannerman away at Ord River.

Thursday, Mar 11

Sturt's Creek Station, Copley & Co owners D Bannerman manager, worked by permit. Permanent staff four males, three females, half-caste boy aged 13 years, mother unknown. Employees all well fed from kitchen, and clothed. Inspected large camp of bush natives close to station, 40 men, 52 women, 15 boys, 9 girls, four babies, one half-caste baby eight months old. Gave natives 2 pounds tobacco. All of them looked well and healthy. The men are well proportioned, nearly all six feet high, women also tall and good looking, all of them fat, no shortness of food.

Isdell_1909.0213.101

[Typed diary]

Diary (14) 116

No sickness or disease. Heard of one old man in the bush bad with lupus or cancer in face. Asked Mr Lloyd the storekeeper to try and get him in to Halls Creek.

Friday, Mar 12

Started 6 a.m. and travelled 9 miles to horse tailer's camp. Saw station natives there looking well and happy. Took half-caste boy Jack, aged 13 years from this camp for transport to Beagle Bay. His life amongst these natives not safe.

Saturday, Mar 13

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 16 miles over heavy soft plains to Forster's Creek.

Sunday, Mar 14

Started to 6 a.m. and travelled 22 miles over soft heavy plains.

Monday, Mar 15

Started at 6 a.m. and travelled 14 miles. Hot heavy weather.

Tuesday, Mar 16

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 10 miles to Flora Valley Station. Saw manager Gordon, and told him it was imposition charging the government relief for three natives, told them to come to Hall's Creek relief station.

Wednesday, Mar 17

Started 7 a.m. and travelled 14 miles to foot of ranges.

Thursday, Mar 18

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 18 miles, country very rough. Past Richards Gardens, and Brockman's alluvial field.

Friday, Mar 19

Started at 6 a.m. and travelled 7 miles to Eloire. Camped 2 miles from Halls Creek. Walked to post office and got ridiculous wire from Chief stating can do East Kimberley in two months. He has been led astray by the man in the street. No rations at Halls Creek. I must wait for them to come.

Isdell_1909.0213.99

[Letter]

117

Hall's Creek

Mar 20, 1909

To Chief Protector, Perth

Sir,

I beg to report as follows. On Wednesday 6th January last, I crossed the boundary into East Kimberley district, reaching Mr Cox's Louisa Downs Station that afternoon. Mr Cox was absent with packhorses after rations, returning home on Friday evening. Had to await his arrival to get meat. I put all my packs but one away, and leaving the boy to look after the horses, I took one pack and started across country for Richardson's Bohemia Downs Station, near Christmas Creek. The travelling was terribly rough, and owing to continued heavy rains the flats were very boggy. I made his homestead in about 50 miles, and found natives and everything alright, as previously reported. My poor Ballarat knocked up with me, and I had a job to get back to Cox's, walking on foot large portion of the way. Covered that 100 miles in six days. Inspected Louisa Downs Station natives, also a camp of bush natives, some of them very old, found them all right and in good condition. Gave horse Ballarat, who was poor and weak a couple of days spell, and started on Sunday the 17th for Copley's Margaret River Station arriving there on Monday 18th, only four stock boys employed. Two women and four males, four female indigents on station. They all looked well and fat and quite contented. Half a mile up the river from the station I inspected a large camp of bush natives totally 100, including women and children, 1 half-caste girl three years old with them. A mare I had bought at Gogo Station, which my boy was riding, took bad with Kimberly disease, left at station dying, had to buy another horse, as Ballarat was bad and could carry no loading. Left Margaret River Station on Thursday the 21st, and started for Booty's Tambo[sic] Station at the head of the Laura River, arriving there on Saturday the 23rd, 45 miles from Margaret Station. Booty out yard building. Sent bush native who came to my camp with note to him. On Sunday 24th Booty arrived at homestead.

Isdell_1909.0213.99

[Letter]

(2) 118

His staff consisted two men, two women, three children, one of the latter a half-caste boy aged five years old, named Jack Lynett. Did not see any of them all being in the bush. Booty on his arrival found that his store had been broken into, and some rations stolen. Deaf and dumb boy aged 14 years suspected of the robbery. Monday 25th left Booty's for Button's Ruby Plains Station. At Nuggetty Gully saw three miners working, also three male aborigines, three women, three boys and four half-caste girls, two of them orphans four and five years old, one aged six years, and one baby. Very heavy rains during the last three days and nights, making travelling slow and difficult and everything wet. Arrived at Button's homestead of the 26th, and found nobody at home except a camp of natives with whom were three half-caste girls from 5 to 13 years old, and one half-caste boy two years old. Weather very wet. My rations were nearly exhausted, only a little tea and flour, no sugar and no meat. Button was at Halls Creek, but was expected back in two days, decided to wait as I wanted particulars of natives as well as food, and did not want to come back a second time from Halls Creek. Whilst awaiting Button's return I saw a large number of bush natives and had conversations with several. They were all in good condition and seemed happy. One old and intelligent native said that the government should give the natives some country for themselves alone, as there were too many white fellows walk about. I endorsed all he said. My supplies being nearly run out, no meat except kangaroos and iguanas, I decided to start for Halls Creek on Friday the 29th, distant 56 miles, reaching there on 1st February. Here I got a large mail, dating back for five months. I found Hall's Creek almost denuded of supplies, principally owing to several large parties having loaded up for the newly found Tanami goldfield, in the Northern Territory, over 200 miles from Halls Creek. No teams were expected from Wyndham until after the wet season, about May next. I managed to borrow two 50-lb bags of flour from Constable Ryan, but could get no supplies of tea and sugar, except a small quantity from store. Now I was stuck in earnest, as none of the...

Isdell_1909.0213.96

[Letter]

(3) 119

...stations would sell any rations. I was told of a mob of camels coming overland from Hedland to load up at Derby for Halls Creek and Tanama [Tanami?], and wired away an order for supplies. Fortunately they were able to load them. They were to leave Derby on 25th February, arriving in Halls Creek middle of March. The day after my arrival I got a bad attack of fever, and was laid up for several days. As I answered my mail, and seen to everything about Halls Creek, I decided to go out to Button's station, and H Oake's homestead. Accordingly on the 12th I started, with horses kindly lent to me by Mr Way R.M. My own horses being leg weary and poor wanted a spell badly, and I was glad to accept his offer. I left my boy with packs behind, taking a police boy, Mr Way accompanying me. We visited the Brockman alluvial mining camp. Saw three half-caste boys at Esau's Eating House. A man named Magee living there is allowed relief for two old indigent natives? About 30 bush natives camp close to the workings. From Brockman's went to Richards Garden on the Black Elvire River. Saw some natives there, and one man Tommy very bad with venereal. He had been bad over 12 months, his privates being eaten or rotted away and one of his legs very bad. Arranged with Richards to supply him with food until I can get a vehicle to bring him into Halls Creek, for proper attention. Camped on Sawpit Creek and Mr Way took ill during the night and decided to return to Hall's Creek. Next morning

all the horses away, but I found three of them is 7 miles from the camp. Fortunately Mr Oakes happened to come along and sent for several of his own horses and shifted us to near his homestead, which consists of a bow shed, with a bullock hide on the ground for a bed. Next day Mr Way returned to Halls Creek with the three horses I found. Mr Oakes kindly mounted me, and accompany me to Button's Ruby Plains Station. Found Mr Button just arrived home after some days absence. Nearly every day during the last fortnight we have had sharp thunderstorms, every day you get wet through, and your bedding as well, but manage to dry them before night. Arrived for second time at Button's on Monday 15th, only...

Isdell_1909.0213.95

[Letter]

(4) 120

...one man, one woman and one boy employed on station, but for all that Mr Button is very kind to bush natives, killing cattle and feeding many of them. He gets government relief for two very old natives, one blind. Arranged with him to take six half-castes in his buggy to Wyndham for transport to Beagle Bay, four of his own and two orphan girls. Got information from him of a half-caste girl 60 miles away at Mount Dockrell, also of a boy named Raymond four years old at McPhee Creek, 50 miles from Hall's Creek, also a half-caste girl Minnie aged 13, on Black Eloire River. All these living with natives. Left Button's on the 17th, reaching Oake's homestead that night late, Oakes bringing in some killing cattle with him. On the 19th I reached Hall's Creek, after two days in terrible thunderstorms, everything wet, and had to sleep on wet ground, as all creeks were unswimmable and we could not travel. Mr Way had sent a police boy to Oake's to meet me with horses. Got a bad cold and severe dose of malarial fever, and did not get over it for six days. In the meantime two of my old Nullagine horses had died, Gipsy and Ballarat, only two now left of my Nor-westers. Got wire stating camels left Derby loaded on 25th February, as I cannot possibly start down the road until I get some supplies, I borrowed enough for a short trip to Sturt's Creek and Flora Valley Stations. Heavy rains continuing to fall delayed my start until Wednesday March 3. Got to Flora Valley Stn on evening of the fourth. Six men, six women, and one boy employed - one Northern Territory boy should be sent back to his own country - one half-caste boy four years old, three indigents getting government relief. Thirty bush natives camped close to station. They do not show any shortness of food and looked well. Station natives seemed well clothes and treated. Started on the morning of March 5, and reached Sturt's Creek Station on the 10th, after very severe travelling over Denison Plains, owing to heavy rains and boggy country. Four males, three females and one boy employed on station, one half-caste boy native of...

Isdell_1909.0213.94

[Letter]

(5) 121

...Margaret River, aged 13 years. Inspected over 100 bush natives camped close to station, all fine stalwart men and women, fat and sleep, and a large number of boys and girls, one half-caste baby boy eight months old. Station kills beef for them occasionally. Now the wet season is on there is plenty of bush food. I left on the return trip on 12th March, arriving at Hall's Creek on the morning of the 19th, bringing in with me the half-caste boy for transport to Beagle

Bay. On arrival I found that the camels with loading only crossed Fitzroy four days before, being stopped by floods. Supplies are shorter than ever at Halls Creek, and I must await the arrival of the stores about the end of the month. In the meantime whilst waiting will visit Shepherd and Mainson's stations 30 to 50 miles from Hall's Creek. Bedford Downs should be visited, as I hear bad accounts of it, also that there are a lot of venereal cases out there. As soon as I get my stores I will carry out my telegraphed instructions from you and travel down Goldfields Road to Wyndham, leaving out of course all those stations a long way off the road, and return by the old river [Ord River?]. Owing to the many stations in East Kimberley, being situated at all points of the compass, they cannot be taken in line, to visit them all you would cover considerably over 2000 miles, some of the stations you are sure to be delayed at, as the manager may be absent, and you must wait to get particulars of the natives, you have to take a fair supply of stores, as stations will not sell, and as it is impossible to do so in two packs, I have been compelled to purchase horses and packs out of my own pocket, whether the department will compensate me for the outlay remains to be seen. As the Premier, Mr Moore has some practical knowledge of bush work and travelling, I intend laying the matter before him. Your latest wire informs me that Mr Brockman and others, men in the Sturt I suppose, have told you that all the East Kimberley could be visited in two months. This is arrant nonsense on the part of those people, it would not be done in a motorcar in that time, you must take into consideration that the tropical wet season is on, that all the rivers are swollen and unfordable for days, and that no man would up camp and off in the middle of a thunderstorm.

Isdell_1909.0213.93

[Letter]

(6) 122

You cannot make continuous long stages with horses in this climate, nor can you carry heavy loads. This is not the North West. It is a totally different climate, far more unhealthy for stock than human beings. You have only to see the hundreds of deaths among the horse stock every year, running into thousands of pounds. Come and see the cattle during the winter months, nothing but walking skeletons. A man has to know something about horses and be a bushman to keep them up to condition with continuous travelling. Mr Brockman knows the Leopold country, but I do not think he knows much about this portion of East Kimberley. There are a new stations in all directions formed within the last three years. You cannot take their xxxxx unless you have a large number of packs, you have got to get back to some centre for supplies. However, it is no use writing about it. I have to buy my own horses to do the work, and the time for settlement will come later on. Will report again from Turkey Creek.

I remain, Yours obediently,

James Isdell

Isdell_1909.0213.85

(1) 148

Diary of Travelling Inspector Isdell

Saturday, Mar 20

Weather very sultry. Slight touch of fever. So much quinine and fever mixture is making me a bit deaf. Camels with loading will not be here until end of month.

Sunday, Mar 21

Stayed in camp writing.

Monday, Mar 22

Went to Hall's Creek, posted mail, and shifted my packs from post office to camp. Arranged with P.C. Ryan about collecting half-castes. Will take some time, they are so scattered. Sorry I cannot visit Shepherd's, Meinson's, Green's, and Bedford Downs Station, as they are outside my instructions. Meinson brought in a half-caste boy from his station. Left him with the Police.

Tuesday, Mar 23

Started 6.30am, shifted camp seven miles out to the racecourse, to await arrival of camels with stores. Left half-caste boy Jack at Post Office, to await transport to Wyndham.

Wednesday, Mar 24

Fixed up camp and making fly beaters for horses.

Thursday, Mar 25

Repairing saddles. Touch of fever. Nasty unhealthy moist heat.

Friday, Mar 26

Whiteman in camp. Says camels will be in on Saturday. Good job.

Saturday, Mar 27

Mail arrived from Wyndham. No letters. Mr Bannerman, manager Sturt Creek Stn at camp. He tells me half-caste boy Jack is 16 years old. Told him if he can furnish me with boys history he can take him back. Mr Meinson, pastoralist wrote saying he knew the boy since he was born, and he is within a few months of 16 years. Sent him back with Mr Bannerman.

Sunday, Mar 28

Shifted camp on to Caroline Pool, 3 miles from Halls Creek. Camels arrived afternoon.

Monday, Mar 29

Rode into Halls Creek. My stores landed at Inglis's store. Got police boys to shift them to police station.

Isdell_1909.0213.84

(2) 149

Tuesday, Mar 30

Took packs in and loaded up; and shod two horses.

Wednesday, Mar 31

Bad touch fever. Weather very cloudy and heavy, slight rain.

Thursday, Apr 1

Rain during night and rainy this morning.

Friday, Apr 2

Raining this morning. P.C. Schultz arrived with a batch of cattle killers. Got note from Magistrate, wishing to see me.

Saturday, Apr 3

Started boy with packs to rockhole, Wyndham Road 8 miles from Halls Creek. Saw Mr Way. A man named Bennett, who has a large through trade, and is leaving for Wyndham on Monday, wished to arrange for transport of sick natives and half-castes, at a reasonable figure. No time to submit terms to Chief, so have taken responsibility of accepting myself, might not get

another such offer. Mr Way drove out to the Brockmans, to arrange for three half-castes there to come tomorrow.

Sunday, Apr 4

Arranged with Bennett to take two venereal women, one black woman, two orphan blackboys, and four half-castes in his trap providing food, etc, for £30. Any others picked up on the road at £3 per head. George Wright with his own conveyance takes three half-castes, and acts as escort for £10. Could get no suitable clothes for these children except some singlets. Got five singlets and three blankets, also two Departmental blankets from Police Station. Went out to camp.

Monday, Apr 5

Bennett started for Wyndham this morning. The R.M. rode out to camp and stayed the night. G. Wright took letter and full particulars for Sgt Buckland.

Tuesday, Apr 6

R.M. and self rode into Halls Creek. Sent telegram re transport to Chief, Jenkins, Turkey Creek; Sgt Backland, Sub-Inspector McCarthy, Derby, Corporal Stewart, Broome, and Father Bischofs, Beagle Bay. Got back to camp late. Little rain.

Isdell_1909.0213.198

[Telegrams]

11 Apr 1909 – delayed by interruption to lines

To Chief Protector, Aborigines, Perth

From J Isdell

Taken advantage economical opportunity forwarding to Wyndham nine aboriginals and half castes en route Beagle Bay and Bernier Island. Cost conveyance rationing and escort to Wyndham forty pounds. Steamer leaving for Broome twentieth inst. Two of women suffering venereal one exceptionally bad. Been receiving relief some years already cost over fifty pounds. No other chance conveyance and no steamer further two months. Rationing this number for this period would almost equal cost of transport. Possibility additional aboriginals and half-castes being picked up en route at extra charge three pounds each. Store forwarded particulars. Police Wyndham please authorise Resident Magistrate Wyndham pay William Bennett thirty pounds for conveyance and supplying rations and George Wright person in charge ten pounds latter taking three additional half-castes in private conveyance. Unable submit offer earlier and delay would lose this opportunity. Probability portion of cost be recovered later from some of the putative fathers. Further particulars refer Resident Magistrate Halls Creek. Isdell Had to purchase blankets clothing for half-castes aborigines despatched Wyndham. Total amount three pounds seven shillings. Please instruct paymaster Wyndham refund to me on production receipts. Isdell

Leaving for Wyndham today. Been considerably delayed waiting arrival of supplies. Will follow road to Wyndham as instructed. Wire from there. Isdell

Isdell_1909.0213.83

(3) 150

Wednesday, Apr 7

Raining this morning. Two horses away. Boy back late.

Thursday, Apr 8

Started 6:30 a.m. travelled 20 miles Goldfields Road. Very hilly and weather very sultry.

Friday, Apr 9

Three horses went back last night 12 miles. Got a late start, at 12:30 p.m. Travelled 12 miles and camped in bed of Panton River. Can feel this fever coming on again. Grey horse Freddy getting bad with Kimberley disease.

Saturday, Apr 10

Beautifully clear night till 1 a.m. when suddenly heavy thunderstorm. Got everything wet through. Passed a miserable night. Drying camp till 12 p.m. Started and travelled 9 miles to government well in old alluvial workings. Found unfortunate white man camped under bow shed, down with fever.

Sunday, Apr 11

Very bad. started at 9 a.m. travelled 8 miles to Alice Downs Station and collapsed.

Monday, Apr 12

Could not shift. Fever too bad. Mr Yates managing partner Alice Downs also down with fever. Alice Downs Station. Cranwell, Yates and Taylor owners. Yates manager. 3000 cattle worked by a permit, staff two males (one Queenslander), one old woman, no half castes, indigents or disease. Mr Yates complained of warrants issued over five years ago for the arrest of noted ringleaders of cattle killers never having been executed. Met white man from Powell's Creek Northern Territory with Territorial aboriginal boy. Wanted permit. Referred him to R.M. Halls Creek. Mr Yates informs me that one woman, Rosey, a voluntary transport for Beagle Bay, and a half caste girl Minnie, aged 13, cleared out during night from Bennett. Bennett spent next day looking for them, without success. It matters little about the woman Rosey, but Minnie will have to be found. This girl has no parents, and has been living in the bush with natives, and is a bit wild.

Tuesday, Apr 12

Travelled 16 miles to large creek. Terribly hot. Horses feel heat very much. Poor Freddy the horse bad. Rain last night.

Wednesday, Apr 13

Started 6 AM and travelled 15 miles. Crossed Ord River. Sharp rain last night.

1909.04.15-19 [Typed diary – missing page sent by SROWA 07.07.20]

(4) 151

Thursday, Apr 15

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 14 miles to Fletcher's Creek Station. Owner Mr Teroney absent in Wyndham. Old man in charge. Saw three women at station, three half-castes 9 months to 6 years old. Could get no information.

Friday, Apr 16

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 6 miles to Muggleton's Station.

Frog Hollow Station.

S Muggleton owner, J McKenzie manager. 2500 cattle worked on permit. Staff 4 males, 3 women, 2 children, indigents 1 blind woman, no disease. About a dozen old natives camp half a mile up the creek from station. They get meat and occasional rations from the station.

Muggleton is a good friend to natives. They all look fat and healthy. McKenzie owns pastoral leases and stock. On three different occasions he started on his leases, but on each occasion

was driven away by natives robbing the place. He is now a partner of the Alice Downs people. He has a Queensland woman who has been in his service for 20 years, and has a half-caste son aged three years by him, whom he intends sending the south to school. He does not cohabit with the woman, who is close on 50 years old. She lives on creek with other natives. McKenzie is closed on 60 years old. The woman will not go back to her country. You cannot turn her adrift, nor can you accuse him of cohabiting. I think it best to let her stay as she is. Started in the afternoon and travelled 12 miles to Bridges Alice Downs Station, late to camp.

Saturday, Apr 17

Walked up to the station. Mr Bridges away, not home until night. Will have to wait to see him. P.C. Ryan of Halls Creek arrived, with seven native prisoners for Wyndham [re Cons 430, 1909/2895]. Very hot and sultry. Horse Freddy very bad. Will not live many days.

Sunday, Apr 18

Mr Bridges did not return home last night. Got particulars from Mrs Bridges.

Mabel Downs Station

J P Bridges owner and manager. 3000 cattle worked by permit. Permanent staff 2 males, 5 females, no indigents or disease.

One woman Lily has half caste boy three years. Constable Jenkins of Turkey Creek at station. Started 10 a.m. and travelled 10 miles. Camped Turkey Creek.

Monday, Apr 19

Started 6 a.m. and travelled 6 miles...

Isdell_1909.0213.82

(5) 152

...to Turkey Creek. Received wire from Chief re Rosey, black woman, wired Buckland Wyndham re transport of half-castes.

Turkey Creek Station

Rhattigan owner and manager. 2000 cattle worked by permit. Permanent staff 3 males, 4 females. No station indigents or disease. One woman Biddy has half caste boy 2 1/2 years old. Rhattigan relief officer has two old women and two young men, both blind on relief list. Turkey Creek Police Station has six males and four females. Four males are police assistance, and the women belong to them. Granted general permit to Constable Jenkins and gun licenses to Donald and Davy, police assistants.

Tuesday, Apr 20

Delayed this morning waiting for Telegraph office to open. Wired Chief re girl Rosey and horse Freddy. Started at 8 a.m. and travelled 14 miles. Freddy seems better giving him soda damper.

Wednesday, Apr 21

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 14 miles to Sandy Creek.

Thursday, Apr 22

Started 6 a.m. and travelled 18 miles to Fry's camp. Crossed Big Bow River, passed through Heartens and Macale's pastoral holdings. Neither of them have homesteads or fixed abodes. Camping anywhere, and always on the move. Might take some weeks to find them considered it useless to look for them. Both have natives employed.

Friday, Apr 23

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 14 miles to Wild Dog Spring.

Sunday, Apr 25

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 10 miles to Denham Station, Denham River

Denham Station

P.M. Durack owner and manager. 7000 cattle worked by permit. Permanent staff four males, four females, one boy six years old, no indigents, half-castes or disease, except Kimberley fever. Saw natives, who all looked well and happy. Some of them nine years on station. Never had a native run away.

Monday, Apr 26

Started 6 a.m. and travelled 16 miles to Dillon's Spring. Saw J McAtee who holds pastoral lease here. Has 300 cattle, no natives, homestead, or yards. Asked me for general permit, as he intends employing some natives shortly.

Isdell_1909.0213.81

(6) 153

Tuesday, Apr 27

Started 7 a.m. and travelled 7 miles to Sandy Creek. Met Mr Nelson, owner and manager of Hillgrove Station, 1200 cattle, permanent staff 3 males, 1 female, no indigents, half-castes or disease. Heavy clouds, little rain.

Wednesday, Apr 28

Heavy rain all night, and up to 10 a.m. Did not travel.

Thursday, Apr 29

Rained heavily all night and up to 8 a.m., then cleared. Dried camp and started 12 noon travelled 12 miles.

Friday, Apr 30

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 16 miles to Mugg's Lagoon. Passed en route for Hall's Creek Messrs Buchanan, Gordon and others, with large turnout of buggies and packs.

Saturday, May 1

Started 6 a.m. and travelled 10 miles, delayed on road getting information from Muggleton of Frog Hollow Station and also G Wright, who took half-castes to Wyndham.

Sunday, May 2

Started at 6:30 a.m. and travelled 14 miles to Three Mile Hotel, camped across creek.

Monday, May 3

Rode into Wyndham. Had conversations with Dr O'Brien, R.M. and Sgt Buckland. Got a wire from Chief re mules, also Cpl Stewart Broome re safe arrival of half-castes, and delivery to mission people. Back to camp.

Tuesday, May 4

Writing up correspondence. Mail expected at 8. Will wait for it.

Isdell_1909.0213.80

(1) 158

Wednesday, May 5

In camp writing. Freddy horse not dead, but very poor and weak.

Thursday, May 6

Rode into Wyndham and posted mail. Got wire Cpl Stewart Broome halfcastes per SS June handed over to mission people. Drove out with Mr Milan, officer in charge of boring operations, to one mile, and inspected indigents camp and syphilitic patients. Inspected gaol and native prisoners. Back to camp.

Friday, May 7

Writing in camp. Shod three horses. Very hot and sultry.

Saturday, May 8

Rode into Wyndham and consulted Sgt Buckland re having prohibited area proclaimed at three mile. He is very anxious for it. Number of nude bush natives, Women and men fully armed, come in there and defy the police. Arrival of mail uncertain. Will wait a few days. Halls Creek mailman made me an offer to bring from Halls Creek all half castes at £3 per head. Told him I would wire chief, and he would get an answer from Mr Way Halls Creek.

Sunday, May 9

Intended starting for Argyle Station today but will have to Telegraph Chief re mailman's offer re half-castes

Monday, May 10

Shod two horses and did some writing. Mr Milan and Constable Hill at camp, looking for six native prisoners who escaped with their chains this morning. Boy away after horses all day.

Tuesday, May 11

Rode into Wyndham. Sergeant Buckland told me Hall's Creek mailman could not get buggy to bring half-castes down. Government veterinary surgeon and stock inspector Mr Haley expected in town tonight.

Wednesday, May 12

Rode into Wyndham and saw Mr Haley re horse Freddy. Arranged to meet him at government dip, when he would inspect all the horses. Wired Chief leaving tomorrow.

Thursday, May 13

Late start, horses being five miles out for grass and water. Started 9 a.m. and travelled 11 miles on...

Isdell_1909.0213.79

(2) 159

...Govt well. Saw several bush natives and women at well. Not working, living on the prostitution of the women.

Friday, May 14

Two horses away. Late start at 8 a.m. Travelled 14 miles. A man named Lacey rode into camp and dropped his horse, bad with fever, nearly dying. Went out of his mind. Boy and self had difficulty in keeping him from running amok into the bush. Sat up and watched him all night. Got better toward morning. Grey horse Freddy better.

Saturday, May 15

Started 7 a.m. and travelled 5 miles to government dip and residence of Mr Haley who was absent. Did not return till evening. Brought me wire from Chief re mules.

Sunday, May 16

Mr Haley inspected horses and Freddy. Could do nothing for him. Gave me some phenyle to dress horses for ticks and mange. Mr Durack of Argyle Station drove to camp. Told me his mules were too young and small for my use. Started 6 a.m. and travelled 14 miles to Ord River.

Monday, May 17

Started 7 a.m. and travelled 12 miles to Slatey Creek. Mr Durack called at camp, en route for Ivanhoe Station.

Tuesday, May 18

Started 6.30 a.m. and travelled 13 miles to Ord River. Camped a mile from Ivanhoe homestead. Ivanhoe stud horse station. Connor, Doherty and Durack owners. McCauley manager. No natives of any sort employed on this place.

Wednesday, May 19

Started 6.30 a.m. and travelled 20 miles to Sunday Creek. Mr Durack called at camp en route for Argyle Station.

Thursday, May 20

Started 7 a.m. and travelled 10 miles to Argyle Station. Saw Mr Durack. Boys away mustering. Back on Sunday.

Sunday, May 23

Camping today. Shod three horses and dosed four of them with turps and oil. Since leaving twelve mile...

Isdell_1909.0213.78

(3) 160

...well Wyndham, have seen no natives except two at Mr Haley's Govt dip, but immense fires burning in every direction.

Isdell_1909.0213.92

[Telegram]

10 May 1909

From Isdell, Wyndham

To Aborigines Dept, Pert

Leaving Wyndham for Hall's Creek - please address correspondence accordingly.

Isdell_1909.0213.88

[Letter]

(1) 133

Wyndham, May 14th, 1909

To Chief Protector, Perth

I beg to forward progress as follows:-

On April 8th I finally left Hall's Creek, after being detained some weeks waiting for rations. According to your telegraphic instructions, I followed the Goldfields Road to Wyndham, distant close on 300 miles from Hall's Creek. En route I visited and saw the natives on the very few stations on the road. Alice Downs Stn, Cranwell, Yates & Taylor owners, two boys and one woman, one of the boys being a Queensland native. Teroney's Fletcher's Creek Stn, three women, three half-castes, no male natives, owner absent in Wyndham. Frog Hollow Stn, S

Muggleton owner absent in Wyndham - three boys, four women. Mabel Downs Stn, J P Bridges, three boys, five women. Turkey Creek Stn Rhattigan owner, three boys, two women, also four indigents on relief. Denham Stn, P M Durack owner, four boys, four women. Altogether six stations. The very few natives employed seem to be well treated and contented. About 18,000 cattle are run by these lessees. The reason given me for so a few natives being employed on the stations is that no matter how well they are treated they will not accept employment - so much bush food, and the liberty of roaming about and killing cattle being more attractive, Durack's Dunham Downs Station being an exception. Mr Durack informed me that no native had ever run away from his place, and that those with him have been in his service for nine years. I met Mr Teroney on the road back from Wyndham, and spoke to him regarding women and half-castes on his place. He told me he had only lately started, and had had boys, but they had run away and left the women. As they had children he did not care to hunt them away, on account of the youngsters, but would do so if desired. As the women cannot support themselves in the bush, I told him to get some other natives in his employ, so as to fulfil the Act. One of the half-castes is a boy six years old. I instructed Const Jenkins, Turkey Creek, to bring him in to the Police...

Isdell_1909.0213.87

[Letter]

(2) 134

...Station, also a half-caste girl eleven years old from Texas Stn and have them handy to go away with the next batch of half-castes. Teroney denies being the father of any of the half-castes at his place, although one of the women told me he was the father of a baby nine months old. I may say that it is impossible for me to send in a comprehensive report of East Kimberley. My instructions to follow the Goldfields Road to Wyndham precluded me. The following stations I have not been able to visit under those instructions. To better understand the position, the road from Halls Creek to Wyndham is nearly due North and South. The majority of the stations are situated to the west of the road, ranging in distance from 15 to 60 miles as the crow flies, which really means nearly double that distance for horses. To have properly inspected this large portion of East Kimberley would have taken at least another three months. I may state that in returning to Halls Creek per Ord River Road, according to instructions, I will also miss several important stations. To do justice to East Kimberley, and return a comprehensive report of any value, it would have taken, as I previously stated, close to the end of the year. As I have only two packs available for rations, I would have had to make arrangements for supplies to be sent to me along the road, and of course a lot of time would be lost going in for these rations. No stations will supply you with stores. They all pack only sufficient for themselves. The following stations I have not visited, and therefore can make no report on:- Shepherd's, Meinson's, Green's, Bedford Downs, McNamara's and Newman's, Gordon's, Wilson's, McKenzie's, Brennan's, McLoughlin's, Martin's, Leonard's, McCales', Heaston's, Wynne's, Wells's. I may state that Heaston and McCale have no homesteads or camps, but are always on the move, and it might have taken me weeks to locate them, although their leases are directly on the road. Under your instructions I have visited six stations, but have missed 16 others. How many I will miss on the Ord River Road I cannot yet say.

Venereal:- I found with the exception of Hall's Creek, that this disease is not very prevalent.
Constable Schulz of...

Isdell_1909.0213.86

[Letter]

(3) 135

...Hall's Creek informed me that there are some bad cases out at McNamara's. He was unable to bring them in, as they could neither walk nor ride. Also Constable Jenkins of Turkey Creek informed me that there were some cases at Bedford Downs. He brought some in, and took them to Wyndham, but none of the very bad cases can be brought in unless the police have a conveyance for the purpose. None of the stations have any, and I am sure it would be more economical to supply these outside police stations with a spring cart and harness to remove these unfortunate sick natives, and also for transportation purposes.

There are four indigents at Turkey Creek, under care of Rhattigan, two old women and two young men, both totally blind. They are well treated and looked after. I will not write about native prisoners in this report. It is really appalling - a continual stream of natives up and down the road, going to and coming from gaol. It is a terrible disgrace to the Government, and it should be altered. In a very short time you will be unable to get a native in any part of Kimberley over 16 years old that has not been in gaol. Terrible harm is being done to the younger generation of bush natives, the blame of which lays with the Government. The present system of punishment of natives for cattle killing is anything but deterrent. It is a purely rotten system to the core. Every inhabitants of both Kimberleys, including all the police, condemn it as perfectly useless, and so it is. In another letter I report on the natives in prison.

I remain, Yours obediently,

James Isdell

Isdell_1909.0213.77

(1)

Monday, May 24

Argyle boys returned last night.

Argyle Station. Connor, Doherty & Durack owners, Ambrose Durack manager. 39,000 cattle worked by permit. Permanent staff 9 boys, 4 women, 4 children, 2 half-castes, Chloe 8 years, 1 baby boy three months old. All the natives look well, plenty to eat and warm clothing. All of them have been a long time in the employ of the station, from 6 to 23 years. One of native died a few years ago, having been with the Duracks 35 years, a good record, showing kind treatment. The drenching of oil and turps I gave my horses is acting well, will have to give them another day's rest. Granted general permit to Mr Durack, and two gun licenses, to Bowyer and Ulysses, two old servants of the Duracks. No native have ever run away from this station.

Tuesday, May 25

Horses Freddy, Joker and Bally still suffering from effects of drenching, did not think it is advisable to start. Rode out to the natives camp, saw three men, 6 women and three children. All looked well, abundance of bush food, one man Billy just returned from Perth from the service of Inspector Lawrence.

Wednesday, May 26

Horses better started 6:30 a.m. travelled 15 miles to Goose Creek. Nights very cold, days very warm.

Thursday, May 27

Started at 6:30 a.m. travelled 15 miles to this Lissadell Station. Crossed Ord River. Manager Mr Hill absent with all the boys cattle mastering, saw storekeeper.

Lissadell Station. Durack and Hill owners, F. C. Hill manager, 27,000 cattle worked by permit, permanent staff 11 boys, six females, one boy 12 years and two children. No indigents, half-castes or sickness, except two cases fever. Storekeeper tells me fever very bad at station, everyone taking daily doses of quinine. The station women seemed well cared for, plenty of food, clothing and blankets. Some of the natives have been with Mr Durack for 20 years, none less than six years, never had a native...

Isdell_1909.0213.76

(2)

... run away from the station.

Friday, May 28

Started 6:30 a.m. across country for Fegan's Springvale Station. Travelled 15 miles and camped on Ord River.

Saturday, May 29

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 15 miles over very rough country. Left the Ord and travelled up large rough creek, saw no tracks for signs of natives, grass is very dry, horses falling away.

Sunday, May 30

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 10 miles to Fegan's homestead. Fegan absent, only two women, two children and one half-caste girl aged 11 years.

Monday, May 31

Fegan returned home today.

Springvale Station. Joseph Fegan owner and manager, 500 cattle worked by permit, permanent staff two boys and two women, 3 boys two to 15 years old, one half caste girl Gracie 11 years old. No disease but fever bad, the girl Gracie being very bad from it. Arranged with Fegan to take a girl Gracie to Wyndham, catch next mailboat for Broome, en route to Beagle Bay. About 10 old natives camped on creek, getting meat and a little rations from Fegan. Station natives look well and contented. Granted permit to Fegan. Bush natives give no trouble, gave the old natives some tobacco.

Tuesday, Jun 1

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 15 miles to Nine Mile Creek. Red horse ticks very bad. Freddy and Paddy's legs very bad state, dressed them with diluted phenyle. Horse Freddy very poor but recovering from Kimberley disease. Horse Paddy totally unfit to carry packs with this sore legs, but having no spare horse he has to suffer. Case of cruelty to animals chargeable against the Aborigines Department.

Wednesday, Jun 2

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 16 miles to Ord River. Horse Paddy terribly bad, real agony for him to carry pack. Scandalous shame I am not supplied with an efficient outfit of horses.

Travelled over very hilly and rough country.

Thursday, Jun 3

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 7 miles to Kelly and Sexton's Texas Station.

Isdell_1909.0213.75

(3)

Texas Station. Kelly and Sexton owners, Kelly manager. 3000 cattle worked by permit, staff three men, four women. No indigents, half castes or sickness, usual fever bad. Mrs Kelly and two native women very ill with it. All the boys away mustering. Women well cared for. These natives have been with Mr Kelly for many years.

Friday, Jun 4

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 12 miles to Ord branding yard, where I saw six station boys at work in yard, they seemed well cared for and quite happy. Their food is all cooked for them. At midday I camped for a couple of hours at Ord River salt pan. A man named Reynolds lives here and employs from 4 to 8 natives collecting salt off slate bar in bed of river ?. When river is low about a dozen salt springs keep bubbling up to the surface in different places in the bar, and leave a large deposit of pure salt. The salt is workable for about seven months of the year. His natives looked well.

Saturday, Jun 5

Started 7 a.m. and travelled 14 miles, camped on Ord River. Horse Paddy can hardly walk, his legs being so sore with red tick, a cruel shame to work him.

Sunday, Jun 6

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 6 miles to Ord River Station, Mr Lloyd manager, absent at Flora Valley. Got all particulars from Mr Moore, overseer and storekeeper.

Ord River Station.

Copley and Patterson owners, F. C. Lloyd manager. 70,000 cattle worked by permit. Permanent staff 61 males, 70 females, 50 children. One station woman Nelly has half caste girl 18 months old. Never less than 30 indigents camped near station, often increased to 60 from the bush. They get plenty of meat and all looked well. Amongst these indigents are three women with half castes, a baby six months, a girl 2 1/2 years, and a boy five years old. No cases of venereal but fever is very prevalent, five natives have died this year from the effects of it, and five women and four children were ill with it at the time of my visit. One native man was ill from some unknown complaint, he has been ill for three weeks refusing food and drink. He told the other natives he was going to die as a Juno was in him. All of the station...

Isdell_1909.0213.74

(4)

... boys were absent mustering. All of the women looked fat and well. their food is cooked for them, no rations being given out. Mrs Lloyd is very kind and unremitting in her care and attention to sick natives.

Monday, Jun 7

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 16 miles to creek with a fine stream of water running, very little feed country very bare of grass.

Tuesday, Jun 8

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 20 miles to outstation, no grass and bad water. Horses took bad for want of feed. Cattle very poor.

Wednesday, Jun 9

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 22 miles to Turner River, followed camel pad lately from all Halls Creek. Took me 12 miles out of my course to outstation. No road over this country.

Thursday, Jun 10

Started 7 a.m. and travelled 12 miles down Turner River to outstation, two boys at home, four others out mustering. Found boys with insufficient blankets. Wrote to Mr Lloyd to supply them. About 30 old men and women and children camped half mile from station, they get plenty of meat the stockman killing a beast for them occasionally, besides what waste they get from the cook. All of the boys are well fed from the kitchen.

Friday, Jun 11

Started 6:30 a.m. and travelled 12 miles over rough country up bed of Eloire River to A. G. Wilson's Panton Hill Station. Splendid green grass and water. Best I have seen for weeks. Will give horses a days spell on it.

Saturday, Jun 12

Spelled today. Shod three horses, country travelled very rough one has to carry half a pack load of horseshoes.

Panton Hills Station.

A. G. Wilson owner and manager. 1500 cattle worked by permit. Permanent staff one boy. No indigents or half castes. Mr Wilson informs me he used to give employment to several natives and feed several natives and children but had to hunt them as they killed his goats, and the...

Isdell_1909.0213.73

(5)

... boys speared his milkers calves. Quite sufficient provocation to compel him to hunt all the aborigines off his run. He complained that the Police will not do anything to arrest the worst of the natives, but just send their native assistants out armed with rifles, to catch the first natives they see.

Sunday, Jun 13

Started 8 a.m. across country for Panton River. No road or pad, country very hilly and rough, the usual road via Flora Valley is also hilly and rough, but no grass, and little water. Plenty good grass and water present route. Travelled 12 miles. Horse Paddy's legs very sore with horse ticks, have to travel slowly with him. Exchanged with Mr Wilson the mare Bally for nice big bay colt, four years old just broken in. The mare is very bad with mange, a good pack mare with a heavy pack, but was a nuisance with the other horses, continually biting and running them, causing sore backs. Consider I made a good deal.

Monday, Jun 14

Started 6.30 a.m. and travelled 14 miles over very rough ranges, camped uncertain of next water, no signs or tracks of any natives. Expected to see some in the hills.

Tuesday, Jun 15

Started 7 a.m. and travelled 12 miles to large creek. Good feed and water. Ranges very rough, had to travel very slowly, and walk on foot in some places. Nights very cold, cutting up the horses very much.

Wednesday, Jun 16

Started 6.30 a.m. travelled 16 miles over rough buck spinnifex ranges. Camped on Panton River. Very little water, feed good. Day very warm. No tracks or signs of bush natives, boy got touch of fever.

Thursday, Jun 17

Started 6.30 a.m. and travelled 12 miles to large creek. Water very scarce. Very hot, like summer. Saw fresh tracks of natives in creek and remains of a camp of bush women at water. Boy no better.

Friday, Jun 18

Started 6 a.m. and travelled 20 miles to sheep camp, Govt Well. Day very warm with...

Isdell_1909.0213.72

(6)

...thunder clouds about. Fever weather.

Saturday, Jun 19

Started 6 a.m. and travelled 12 miles to Caroline Pool, three miles from Hall's Creek. No grass, very bare.

Sunday, Jun 20

Some of the horses away. Afternoon took packs into Hall's Creek, for rations and meat.

Monday, Jun 21

Shifted camp to White Eloire River, for grass for horses. Waiting arrival of mail.

Isdell_1909.0213.61

(1)

[Letter]

Caroline River, Halls Creek

19/6/09

To Chief Protector, Perth

Sir,

I beg to report as follows on my return trip from Wyndham to Halls Creek, by the Ord River, as previously instructed. On Ord River Road I visited all station on that route, six in number, via Argyle Stn, Connor, Doherty & Durack, 40,000 cattle, 13 natives employed, six children, four half-caste girls.

Lissadell Station, Durack and Hill owners, 27,000 cattle, 17 natives employed, three children.

Springvale Station, J Fegan, owner, 400 cattle, 4 natives employed, two children, one half-caste girl eleven years old.

Texas Station, Kelly and Sexton owners, 3,000 cattle, seven natives employed.

Ord River Stn, Copley and Patterson, owners, 70,000 cattle, 131 natives employed (61 men and 70 women), 50 children, 4 half-castes.

Panton Hill Station, A G Wilson owner, 1,500 cattle, 1 native employed.

The stations that I have not visited, as they were off the Ord and outside my instructions are — Spurling's on Pentacost River, Carlton; Emmanuel & Kidman's Rosewood; Kilfoyle's and McDonald's, between Ord River and Turkey Creek.

Rosewood Stn is on the border of WA and NT and employs all WA natives. Two other stations on the border employing WA natives, Newry and Auvergne, Connor, Doherty and Durack's I did not visit. Since leaving Wyndham on May 13, I have travelled 485 miles to date. Portion of the route is exceedingly rough, and the grass very poor, owing to the light rains last season...

Isdell_1909.0213.60

(2)

Treatment of natives

So far as the station treatment of employees is concerned, I found everything satisfactory. I had conversations with a number of natives in the different stations, and did not receive a single complaint. All the employed natives have their food cooked, and are fed direct from the kitchen. Considering the large number of cattle on the stations visited, the number of natives employed is very limited. Leaving out the Ord River Station, the remaining five stations, comprising 72,000 cattle, employ only 26 men and 16 women, with nine children. The Ord Station with its 70,000 cattle employees 61 men, and 70 women with 50 children. In regard to old and indigent aborigines the Ord is the only station that partially feeds any — about 30 of such always being camped at the homestead, besides a few at each of the outstations. None of the other stations feed old natives. At Ord Station they kill four or five beasts a week, so they get plenty of meat, besides what the station natives give them. On speaking to some of the station managers re the small number employed, they told me that the natives will not accept work. Sometimes they would work for a month then they clear out. Bush food is a very plentiful, and they would sooner enjoy their roving life than work, numbers of these nomads who occasionally work are the worst cattle killers, not for the sake of the meat but for the sport.

Health of natives

On none of the stations did I find any syphilitic or venereal cases, but malaria or fever is very prevalent, natives being laid up with it on all the stations I visited. Numbers of whites also. On the Ord Station the fever was particularly severe, five natives having died from it this year, and five women and four children were laid up with it on my visit. this sickness effects all natives, bush as well as station employees. I was informed by natives of some very bad cases of venereal amongst bush natives at the head of the Forrest River. It is...

Isdell_1909.0213.59

(3)

...impossible for the police to get these natives in, as they can neither ride nor walk. To bring such natives in for treatment it is necessary that the police should have a conveyance always at hand. The constable at Turkey Creek and also at Halls Creek told me of diseased natives at Bedford Downs and McNamara's, but they could do nothing, as they could neither walk nor ride. Taking that portion of the district I have traversed, the health of the aborigines is good, fever being the only complaint, but it is of an epidemic character. permanent blindness is an affliction fairly prevalent. It affects natives of all ages. You often see well grown young men of 25 to 35 years of age totally blind. There are also many women, especially old ones blind in the natives camps. Their relatives and friends look after them well. I put down the cause of this

prevalent blindness to inoculation by flies from festering sores of a syphilitic nature, assisted by the dirty filthy habits of the natives in their camps and surroundings.

Crimes

The one great and common crime of the natives through out both Kimberleys is cattle killing and maiming. They not only kill for meat, but in most instances simply spear and name them for sport. They drive and run the cattle for miles. The present system of punishment has no terror for these criminals, they rather enjoy the six months imprisonment at Wyndham. they get better food than many working man's family in Perth, and do nothing comparatively speaking in the way of hard labour, or work of any sort. In Wyndham they employ most of them in road making and repairs about the town, but they perform this labour in such a slow leisurely manner that it amounts to only genial exercise. It just keeps them in good health, and their appetites in good order. This kind of punishment has no deterrent effect on their cattle killing instincts; and many of them have been in gaol four or five times for this offence. There is a constant stream of prisoners going to and from Wyndham, some to serve their...

Isdell_1909.0213.58

(4)

...sentences, others returning to their country after serving their time. Wyndham Gaol can accommodate at the outside 100 prisoners, but at the time of my visit there were 155 prisoners cooped up in it. I was informed that some time ago a constable arrived from the bush with a fresh lot of prisoners. The gaol was full and there was no room, so the difficulty was solved by letting 28 natives off their chain who had not finished their time, and allowing the new arrivals to take their place. Such a system will not tend to stop cattle killing. Of course the matter has nothing to do with the Aborigines Department, except the great harm that the discharged natives do among the generation of bush boys. They fire their ambition to visit the gaol, which is looked on by the older natives as solely a resort for a spell. There is no doubt that the crime of cattle spearing is greatly increasing. The night I camped at Kelly and Sexton's Texas Station, Kelly got a letter from his partner Sexton, from Bedford Downs Station, owned by them, stating that the natives were killing and spearing cattle by the hundred, and that out of a herd of 6000 cattle they could not get any fat bullocks this season. Kelly asked me to visit Bedford Downs Station, and report on the natives, but I informed him that I could not do so without instructions. Bedford Downs is 100 miles from Halls Creek, and the same distance from the Goldfields Road at Turkey Creek, so that it was outside my instructions. It is pretty rough on a pioneer when he cannot get any fat cattle out of heard of 6000 after the wet season. A. G. Wilson of Panton Hills Station used to give work to several natives, besides feeding some of natives and children. He bought 30 head of quiet milking cows, some with calves at foot, and in 18 months 28 of his quiet cows and all his calves were killed, so he cleared all the natives of his place, keeping only one boy. He told me he found out that the boys he was feeding in the old natives camp speared his quiet cows, imitating their seniors. Every station that I visited complained of the depredations of the natives. Large stations with bog herds, like Argyle, Ord...

Isdell_1909.0213.57

(5)

...River, and Lissadell, do not feel the loss so much as the small struggling settlers. All the pastoralists agree with me that native stations established in various localities, completely managed and worked by natives, for their own benefit, is the best solution of the difficulty, and all of them are willing to subscribe sufficient stock free of charge to give it a start. The present system of punishment is simply useless, and a waste of public money. Lacedpede Island is where they should go, and earn their keep by digging guano. The present police system of sending one constable out with a couple of assistants is practically useless. It is manifestly unsafe for one white man to penetrate into the rough ranges and follow up cattle killing natives that are wanted. He dare not leave his camp in charge of a native and go after the criminals, to do so means that on his return to camp he finds that bush natives have been and cleared out his stock of rations, the native assistant being either too frightened to prevent, or else he has relatives among the bush natives, and consequently gives them all they want. Under these circumstances the constable has to stay in camp, and send his native assistants fully armed with rifles, to make arrests. They chain up and bring in the first natives they come across, and as these native assistants have relatives in the bush of all descriptions, from actual parents down to fifth or sixth cousins, they take good care not to arrest any of them, although they may actually be the ringleaders. The consequence of this police system is that any natives who may be innocent of any crimes are afraid to come near stations or settlements where they would be likely to get work. The police do the best they can. It is a hard, rough and occasionally dangerous life, but the system is wrong. Hundreds of the young boys now in their teens 12 to 14 years of age must eventually join the elders and end in gaol. A proper patrol party, a capable constable who knows the bush and native ways, with six native assistants brought from the other states or down south, constantly travelling among these outlying stations, would put a big check on the crime. At any rate I am quite safe in stating...

Isdell_1909.0213.56

(6)

...that in a few years, say two, it will be a very difficult matter to find any male natives over the age of 16 years in the bush, that have not served a term of imprisonment for cattle killing. I do not think I am far wrong in stating that the real trouble with natives has yet to come. They are getting more daring and worse every year. It is quite a common thing for bush natives, if they drop across any whites, police or otherwise, to post themselves on a convenient hill, and call the whites all the vile names that they can think of. They are perfectly well aware that the whites dare not shoot or interfere with them. This treatment I have personally experienced, from no reason or cause. However, these matters do not concern me, except as previously stated, they are gradually dragging all the younger natives into the same net.

I remain, Yours obediently,

James Isdell

Isdell_1909.0213.25

[Single typed page, out of sequence]

[Typed diary]

Wednesday, Jul 7

Cold better this morning. Meinsen is managing Shepherd's Mary Downs Station in conjunction with his own which joins it.

Mary Downs Station

J. J. Shepherd. 3600 cattle. F Meinsen manager. Staff 4 males and 2 females, no children, indigents, half-castes or disease. One native who has been a long time with Shepherd, has no less than seven women and 13 children. Shepherd was forced to get rid of him – too many to feed.

Nicholson Plains Station

F Meinsen owner and manager. 2700 cattle work by permit. Permanent staff five males and four females, no half castes, children or disease. About 120 bush natives are camped at a rock hole about a mile from the Homestead, including many old and crippled natives. Meinsen kills beast a week for them, which helps to keep them from starvation.

Thursday, Jul 8

Cold better, but still far from well. Decided to push on. This morning 22 men, 29 women, and 15 children visited my camp. Some of the men could talk a little English, and they asked me to get them food for their women and children. They said the cattle had hunted the native game away, and had eaten up all of the native vegetables, and had destroyed all their best waterholes, where the old people used to camp and catch fish. They did not want to kill cattle if the government would supply them with food. They also stated that they were willing to work, but there was no work for them. These natives practically represented a body of fully 600 natives, within a radius of 50 miles of Hall's Creek, all suffering the same. Something practical must be done by the government. I gave all the grown natives a stick of tobacco each, and the children lollies, paid for out of my own pocket. I would not give them food, as I can hardly carry enough for myself and boy, with my totally inadequate outfit.

Started 11 a.m. and travelled 9 miles to rock hole on a branch of Margaret River.

Friday, Jul 9

Cough very bad, extremely cold bitter weather night and day, cutting horses very much. Started 8 a.m. travelled 14 miles to Lilly waterhole on Margaret River. Three women and two boys at lagoon, living on roots of lilies. Can get no game. Gave them some damper and tobacco.

Isdell_1909.0213.55

[Telegram]

02.08.1909

To Aborigines Dept

From J Isdell

Have been delayed en route from Hall's Creek. Sharp attack of pneumonia had camp fortnight bush now nearly well.

Isdell_1909.0213.54

[Telegram]

04.08.1909

To Aborigines Dept

From J Isdell

Don't feel very fit after severe cold. Will you allow me to rest until end month. Can rent cottage close to Blythe's Station. Plenty of milk vegetables to recuperate. Horse can do with rest – doctored for worms. Please reply. Isdell

Isdell_1909.0213.53

09.08.1909

To Isdell, per Fitzroy Crossing
From Aborigines Dept
Fortnight's leave approved

Isdell_1909.0213.51

[Telegram]

Isdell, Fitzroy, to Aborigines Dept
Please answer my wire – horses starving – what is matter – so much delay

Isdell_1909.0213.50

12.08.1909

To Isdell, Fitzroy Crossing
From Chief Protector, Aborigines Dept
Your wire delayed interrupted lines. I do not understand why horses starving. Your previous wire replied to on the ninth. Is everything right now.

Isdell_1909.0213.49

13.08.1909

[Telegram]

Isdell, Fitzroy, to Aborigines Dept
Will leave for coast nineteenth – horses getting poorer – no water – coast disaster bay boolgin – may have go Beagle Bay leaving packs thence Hunters – please wire instructions further movements. Isdell