

FOREWORD

Once again we return to the magic pudding of Colin Nettelbeck's "The Consul's Treasure" (*Explorations*, n° 7, December 1988, pp. 18-23). This time the sustenance is not society squabbling or the propagation of eucalypts in North Africa but the core business of diplomats: collecting political information and providing assessments for the home government. The text is, therefore, best left in French for the edification of our more specialist readers. However, as Colin Nettelbeck rightly suggests in his introduction, this is a document that can be analysed and pursued in a number of directions.

Biard d'Aunet's memoir falls within the colonial period, but in some ways it can be thought to look forward to the French-language literature that grapples in the following decades with the new Federation. While the nineteenth-century material is covered in C. B. Thornton-Smith, *Analytical Checklist of First-Hand Accounts in French of Colonial Australia with details of published English translations*, revised and enlarged edition (Clayton, English Department, Monash University, 1986), complemented by P. A. Clancy and C. B. Thornton-Smith, *Analytical Checklist of French Fiction and Pseudo-Memoirs set in Colonial Australia* (Melbourne, ISFAR and The Australian Centre, University of Melbourne, 1991), we still need a comprehensive bibliography of twentieth-century contributions. As observers of the growth of Australian studies in French universities will be aware, the pace of publication has quickened again in the last decade or so.

The Sydney Consul-General is a curiously neglected figure, so we have ventured to provide a first set of notes on his career. In due course these will need to be filled out, but for the time being the reader can have some notion of the man who examined the prospects of the Australian Federation in the making.

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