

BDA Source Description Pages

<https://www.bda-online.org.au>**Fifty Years Progress in Australia 1878-1928**

Fifty Years Progress in Australia 1878-1928 was a privately published account of Australia's social and economic progress, funded by the Mercantile Mutual Insurance Company to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

The author, Aidan de Brune, was a journalist, author and pedestrian. In 1921-1924 he became the first known person to walk around the perimeter of Australia. De Brune, whose real name was Herbert Charles Cull (1874-1946), had arrived in Australia as a British immigrant in 1910.

The majority of the book comprises a political and economic history of Australia over the five decades leading up to 1928. Written in a style of bombastic boosterism and xenophobic nationalism common at the time, it is nevertheless full of historical and factual detail relating to the development of the Australian public and private sectors (including transport, mining, agriculture, trade and industry) before and after Federation.

The book includes an appendix containing one hundred biographies of well-known Australians who had lived in the period covered by the book, including figures from government, business, science, religion and the arts. The text of these biographies has been transcribed and edited by BDA and can now be accessed by subscribers to the database.

Contemporary Reviews of *Fifty Years of Progress in Australia*

HALF A CENTURY. "Fifty Years of Progress in Australia, "edited by Mr. Aidan de Brune has been issued to celebrate the fiftieth birthday, last year, of the Mercantile Mutual Insurance Company. It contains a sketch of the political history of the various States during the period and of the Commonwealth subsequently to Federation. There is also an account of the development of our chief industries, primary and secondary, and biographical notices are given of a number of citizens who have played prominent parts in the life of the community during the half-century. (Halstead Printing Co.).

Sydney Morning Herald (NSW : 1842 - 1954) 16 November 1929: 12.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article16602521>

A BOOK OF PROGRESS. A useful volume is "Fifty Years of Progress In Australia," edited by Aiden De Brune. It is a well-bound book of more than three hundred pages and deals with a great variety of subjects concerning the progress of Australia. Each of the states is dealt with individually, then Australia is looked at in its Federal aspect. A good account is given of the participation of Australia in the Great War. The development of railways and tramways is treated of fully. The folly of the broken railway gauges is also considered. The writer of the article says: "There seems to be no alternative to the adoption of a universal gauge for Australia, and to the alteration of all State railways to comply with it". Of course, this should have been done long ago. It will cost a pretty penny when it is done—and the longer it is delayed the more it will cost. There are articles on trade and commerce, the pastoral industry, stock-breeding, agriculture, viticulture, dairying, fruit-growing, bee-farming, irrigation and mining. The mining article deals not only with coal but with copper, gold, diamonds, iron and steel, silver and lead, tin, opals, and asbestos. There are short biographical articles giving important facts about some well-known citizens of the period. The volume concludes with a lengthy illustrated and very readable article on "Fifty Years of Progress of the Mercantile Mutual Insurance Co. Ltd." On the whole, "Fifty Years of Progress In Australia" is a creditable work. It is a pity, however, that its usefulness was not added to by the provision of an Index. "Fifty Years of Progress In Australia" is published by the Halstead Printing Co. Ltd., Allen Street, Waterloo, Sydney.

"LITERARY JOTTINGS" *The Labor Daily* (Sydney, NSW : 1924 - 1938) 23 November 1929: 9.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article239305935>

Sources:

Colin Choat, *The amateur tramp : a walk of ten thousand miles around Australia*, [Mount Colah, New South Wales]: Project Gutenberg Australia, 2018.

<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks19/1901261p.pdf>

Fifty years of progress in Australia, 1878-1928 / edited by Aidan de Brune

National Library of Australia digitised item

Waterloo, Australia : Halstead Printing Co., 1929

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Wikipedia entry: Aidan de Brune

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aidan_de_Brune

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Historical resources available from the BDA Shop

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