

1937.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

ABORIGINAL WELFARE.



INITIAL CONFERENCE OF COMMONWEALTH AND
STATE ABORIGINAL AUTHORITIES

HELD AT

CANBERRA, 21ST TO 23RD APRIL, 1937.

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ABORIGINAL WELFARE.—INITIAL CONFERENCE OF COMMONWEALTH AND STATE ABORIGINAL AUTHORITIES, HELD AT CANBERRA, 21ST TO 23RD APRIL, 1937.

At the Premiers Conference held at Adelaide in 1936, it was decided that there should be a Conference of Chief Protectors and Boards controlling aborigines in the States and the Northern Territory.

2. In pursuance of that decision, the initial Conference was convened by the Commonwealth Government, and was held at Parliament House, Canberra.

3. The Minister for the Interior, the Honorable T. Paterson, M.P., who is vested with the control of aborigines in the Northern Territory, opened the Conference.

4. The representatives of the Commonwealth and States were as follow:—

COMMONWEALTH.

MR. J. A. CARRODUS, Secretary, Department of the Interior.

DR. C. E. COOK, C.B.E., Chief Protector of Aborigines, Northern Territory.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

DR. E. S. MORRIS, Member of the Aborigines Protection Board, New South Wales.

MR. B. S. HARKNESS, Member of the Aborigines Protection Board, New South Wales.

MR. A. C. PETTIT, Secretary, Aborigines Protection Board, New South Wales.

VICTORIA.

HONORABLE H. S. BAILEY, M.L.A., Chief Secretary, Victoria, Chairman of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines.

MR. L. L. CHAPMAN, Under-Secretary, Victoria, Vice-Chairman of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines.

QUEENSLAND.

MR. J. W. BLEAKLEY, Chief Protector of Aborigines, Queensland.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

MR. M. T. McLEAN, Chief Protector of Aborigines, South Australia.

PROFESSOR J. B. CLELAND, Chairman of Advisory Council of Aborigines, South Australia.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

MR. A. O. NEVILLE, Commissioner of Native Affairs, Western Australia.

5. Mr. H. A. Barrenger, of the Department of the Interior, Canberra, acted as Secretary to the Conference.

6. The following resolutions were passed:—

DESTINY OF THE RACE.

That this Conference believes that the destiny of the natives of aboriginal origin, but not of the full blood, lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth, and it therefore recommends that all efforts be directed to that end. (See p. 21.)

UNIFORMITY OF LEGISLATION.

That the details of administration, in accordance with the general principles agreed upon, be left to the individual States, but there shall be uniformity of legislation as far as possible. (See p. 21.)

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT.

That, subject to the previous resolution, efforts of all State authorities should be directed towards the education of children of mixed aboriginal blood at white standards, and their subsequent employment under the same conditions as whites with a view to their taking their place in the white community on an equal footing with the whites. (See p. 21.)

SUPERVISION OF FULL-BLOOD NATIVES.

That this Conference affirms the principle that the general policy in respect of full-blood natives should be—

- (a) To educate to white standard, children of the de-tribalized living near centres of white population, and subsequently to place them in employment in lucrative occupations, which will not bring them into economic or social conflict with the white community;
- (b) To keep the semi-civilized under a benevolent supervision in regard to employment, social and medical service in their own tribal areas. Small local reserves selected for tribal suitability should be provided in these tribal areas where unemployable natives may live as nearly as possible a normal tribal life, and unobjectionable tribal ceremonies may continue and to which employees may repair when unemployed. The ultimate destiny of these people should be their elevation to class (a);
- (c) To preserve as far as possible the uncivilized native in his normal tribal state by the establishment of inviolable reserves; each State or Territory determining for itself whether mission activities should be conducted on these reserves and the conditions under which they may be permitted. (See p. 34.)

RACIAL PROBLEMS.

Realizing that the pursuit of this policy and its ultimate realization, unless subject to enlightened guidance, may result in racial conflict, disastrous to the happiness and welfare of the coloured people, this Conference is of opinion that the Commonwealth should take such steps as seem desirable to obtain full information upon racial problems in America and South Africa for submission to a further conference of Chief Protectors to be held within two years. (See p. 35.)

DEFINITION OF "NATIVE".

That the definition of "native" in any uniform legislation adopted by other States or the Commonwealth, be based on the definition contained in the *Native Administration Act, 1905-1936* of the State of Western Australia. (See p. 21.)

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH.

That the Commonwealth give financial assistance towards the States most requiring it to assist them in the care, protection and education of natives which, unless extended, will bring discredit upon the whole of Australia.

This resolution is put forward for the following reasons:—

- (1) That the principle adopted by this Conference of the ultimate absorption of the native race into the ordinary community can only be achieved by a considerably extended programme of development and education.
- (2) That the work of the States is already saving to the Commonwealth a very considerable sum by reason of the fact that there is being maintained at the cost of the States a large number of people who would otherwise be in receipt of the invalid or old-age pension or other assistance directly from the Commonwealth for which they are now ineligible.
- (3) That the people of all the States are already contributing the whole cost of the care of natives in the Northern Territory, and it is only equitable that the people of Australia should also assist in other parts of the Commonwealth.
- (4) That following the precedent in other British dominions it is reasonable that the Commonwealth Government should bear a considerable part of the cost. (See p. 34.)

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.

That this Conference is not seized of the necessity for corporal punishment. (*See* p. 35.)

POLICE OFFICERS AS PROTECTORS.

That further discussion of this subject be postponed until the next conference. (*See* p. 32.)

FEMALE PROTECTORS.

While the use of female protectors or inspectors for the supervision of female natives in populated areas may in places be desirable, the general appointment of women is not considered practicable, because of the very scattered nature of native camps, the difficulties of travel and the isolation. (*See* p. 33.)

CHAINING OF NATIVES.

That where, for the safety of the escort and the security of the prisoners, it is necessary to subject the prisoners to restraint, it is the opinion of the representatives from the States and Territory concerned that the use of the neck chain while travelling through bush country is preferable to the use of handcuffs, for humanitarian reasons and having regard to the comfort of the prisoners. (*See* p. 32.)

COURTS FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS.

That the jurisdiction of the Court for Native Affairs shall be confined to cases in which both parties are natives.

That mixed cases—those in which a native is involved against a white man or a man of other race—be dealt with by the ordinary courts of the State or Territory.

That natives be not allowed to plead guilty in any case, except with the approval of the Chief Protector.

That a native charged before a white man's court shall have adequate representation by counsel or a protector, or both.

That no confession before trial shall be sought or obtained, or, if obtained, it shall be disregarded by the Court. (*See* section 69 (1.) of the *Native Administration Act, 1905-1936* of Western Australia.)

That for the purpose of this resolution a native shall be a native as defined by this Conference. (*See* p. 31.)

COMPELLABILITY OF WITNESSES.

That in the opinion of this Conference any native woman who, at the time of the commission of the alleged offence, was living as the consort of the defendant and who may reasonably be expected to continue in that association during and subsequent to the legal proceedings, should have the protection of law accorded to a legal wife. (*See* p. 30.)

INTOXICATING LIQUOR.

That uniform legislation be adopted to provide that the supply of intoxicating liquors (including methylated spirits) to natives, as defined in the new definition, shall be an offence. (*See* p. 23.)

OPIUM DROSS.

That this Conference is of the opinion that, in order to prevent the smoking of opium dross by aborigines, the Commonwealth should give consideration to a scheme to place all opium addicts in Northern Australia, of whatever nationality, under strict medical supervision, in order to control the supply of the drug, with a view to effecting the cure of the individual, the reduction of the number of addicts in the future, and especially for the purpose of preventing any trade in opium dross. (*See* p. 25.)

PENSIONS AND MATERNITY ALLOWANCES.

That all natives of less than full blood be eligible to receive invalid and old-age pensions and maternity allowance on the recommendation of the State authority, to whom the grant should be made in trust for the individual. (*See* p. 27.)

RETURN OF NATIVES TO HOME STATE.

That provision be made to give discretionary power to return to his home State any aboriginal temporarily resident in another State. (*See* p. 22.)

GOVERNMENT SUBSIDY TO MISSIONS.

That no subsidy be granted to any mission unless the mission body agrees to comply with any instruction of the authority controlling aboriginal affairs in respect of—

- (a) the standard of education of natives on the mission;
- (b) the measures to be taken for the treatment of sickness and the control of communicable diseases;
- (c) the diet of natives fully maintained on the mission;
- (d) the measures to be taken to regulate the hygienic housing of natives; and
- (e) the maintenance of the mission in a sanitary condition,

and that the mission be subject to regular inspection by an officer of the authority. (*See* p. 29.)

CONTROL OF MISSION ACTIVITIES BY GOVERNMENT.

That governmental oversight of mission natives is desirable.

To that end suitable regulations should be imposed covering such matters as inspection, housing, hygiene, feeding, medical attention and hospitalization, and education and training of inmates, with which missions should be compelled to conform. (*See* p. 30.)

COMPOSITION OF FUTURE CONFERENCES.

That future conferences should consist of representatives of Protectors and Governmental Boards. (*See* p. 29.)

7. The members of the Conference are of opinion that the bringing together of the representatives of the various States and of the Commonwealth affords an excellent opportunity for a free interchange of ideas and discussion of aboriginal problems, and that it is desirable that similar conferences should continue to be held annually, particularly between the Commonwealth and those States where the stage of development of the natives is reasonably akin, and where there are common difficulties of administration to be solved. It would be of advantage if the place of meeting could be changed each year, so that representatives might come into close contact with the actual problems as they arise in each part of the Commonwealth.

8. The Department of the Interior, Canberra, has offered to establish a Secretariat for future conferences, and to provide liaison between the various States and the Northern Territory.

9. A report of the proceedings of the Conference is appended.

Signatures	H. S. BAILEY.
	J. A. CARRODUS.
	C. E. COOK.
	E. SYDNEY MORRIS.
	B. C. HARKNESS.
	A. C. PETTITT.
	L. L. CHAPMAN.
	J. W. BLEAKLEY.
	M. T. McLEAN.
	J. B. CLELAND.
A. O. NEVILLE.	

ABORIGINAL WELFARE.—INITIAL CONFERENCE OF COMMONWEALTH AND STATE ABORIGINAL AUTHORITIES, HELD AT CANBERRA, 21ST TO 23RD APRIL, 1937.

PROCEEDINGS.

The conference met at Parliament House, Canberra, on the 21st April, 1937, at 11 a.m. The Minister for the Interior (Honorable T. Paterson) delivered the opening address.

OPENING ADDRESS.

Mr. PATERSON.—I wish to welcome you to Canberra on behalf of the Commonwealth Government. Some of you have come a long distance to attend this Conference, notably, Mr. A. O. Neville from Perth and Dr. C. E. Cook from Darwin.

As you are aware, this Conference has been called pursuant to a decision arrived at by the Premiers Conference held at Adelaide in August of last year.

For a number of years persons and associations interested in the welfare of the aborigines have made representations to the Commonwealth Government in regard to matters affecting aborigines. Many of the representations related to aborigines under the control of the States, as well as those coming within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth. Repeated requests were made that the Commonwealth should assume control of all the aborigines in Australia; that a kind of national council should be set up to control matters affecting aborigines; and that these questions should be submitted for consideration at a Premiers Conference.

The Commonwealth Government, therefore, consulted the last Premiers Conference on the subject and it was decided that it was impracticable to hand over the control of all the aboriginal people in Australia to the Commonwealth, but that it would be advisable to have periodical conferences of Chief Protectors and Boards controlling aborigines in the States and the Northern Territory. You are assembled here to-day following upon that decision.

This Conference is an epoch-making event. It is the first conference of all the governmental authorities in Australia controlling natives. The public has taken the greatest interest in this meeting, and some decisions of a concrete nature are expected to result from your deliberations.

The welfare of the aboriginal people is a matter in which all the Governments of Australia are vitally interested, and into which politics do not enter. Although the political opinions of governments may differ materially on general questions of policy, there is only one consideration where aborigines are concerned and that is: What is best for their welfare? The problem calls for the earnest consideration of all Ministers and officers vested with the duty of controlling natives and ministering to their wants.

As Minister controlling the Northern Territory, I appreciate to the full the important task that is entrusted to you and the many difficulties that have to be surmounted. I also realize that the problems which confront one State may be totally different from those of another. Nevertheless, nothing but good can result from your meeting one another in friendly discussion

and assisting one another with the experience gained in the performance of your duties in your respective States and Territories.

As you have a long agenda I shall now leave you to your deliberations. I feel sure that something constructive in the interests of the aborigines of Australia will be forthcoming from this meeting.

CHAIRMANSHIP.

Mr. CARRODUS.—Our first duty is to elect a chairman of the Conference. We have one Minister of the Crown present, the Honorable H. S. Bailey, Chief Secretary of Victoria. I think it would be fitting for Mr. Bailey to take the chair.

Resolved—

That the Honorable H. S. Bailey, M.L.A., Victoria, be Chairman of the Conference.

Mr. BAILEY.—I am prepared to take the chair for some little time, at any rate. I am attending the Conference as chairman of the Aborigines' Protection Board of Victoria, of which the Chief Secretary of the State is *ex officio* chairman. Actually, however, the problems relating to aborigines are not acute in Victoria. We have, comparatively speaking, only a handful of full-blooded blacks in our State. We have a larger number of half-castes, about 500 altogether. The Government of Victoria has always made substantial provision for the aborigines within the State. I came here principally as an onlooker, wishing to ascertain the views of the representatives of other States which are called upon to deal with aborigines. I appreciate the courtesy of the Conference in electing me chairman, and shall be glad to preside for some little time. Then, I think, it would be fitting for the Conference to appoint another chairman. Questions relating to the aborigines affect States like Queensland, South Australia, and Western Australia, more than Victoria, and probably New South Wales.

PRESS REPORTS.

Mr. BAILEY.—The Conference should now decide whether the press is to be admitted to the Conference.

Mr. CARRODUS.—I understand that the press is not particularly anxious to be present, but desires that reports be made available by the chairman or secretary at the luncheon and afternoon adjournments.

Resolved—

That the press be not admitted to the Conference, but that reports be prepared by the secretary and issued to the press.

VOTING POWER.

Mr. CARRODUS.—The Conference should now determine in what manner votes shall be recorded. We have three delegates from one State, two from some others, and only one from others. I suggest that each State or Territory should record one vote.

Resolved—

That each State or Territory be entitled to one vote.

MATTERS PUT FORWARD BY QUEENSLAND.

Mr. BLEAKLEY.—I wish to submit the following matters on behalf of Queensland:—

(a) Uniform policy be adopted, broad enough to cover the different conditions in the various States, briefly on the following lines:—

- (i) Protection of the nomadic tribes, their gradual development to self-dependence and restoration of racial pride and confidence;
- (ii) Control, relief and protection of the detribalized;
- (iii) Moral protection of females, check on miscegenation;
- (iv) Upliftment of superior crossbreed;
- (v) Health control, nutrition, medical care;
- (vi) Sympathetic government—defence of primitive offenders.

(b) Uniform legislation for suppression of abuses, protection from exploitation, check of traffic in drink, drugs, and prostitution.

(c) Co-operation between the State administrations be aimed at in the matter of controlling migrations, return of absconders, wife deserters and stranded natives.

(d) A definite sum be made available by the Commonwealth Government for capital expenditure on development of aboriginal institutions towards self-support.

I have prepared a memorandum on the matters mentioned, which reads as follows:—

In presenting the motion from Queensland for discussion, I feel that it will be generally agreed that the care of the aboriginal races should be considered from a nation-wide, rather than from the individual State point of view.

In recent years keen interest has been shown in countries overseas in the treatment of the aborigines of Australia, and it is unfortunate that the Commonwealth Government has had to suffer considerable annoyance and inconvenience because of garbled and often mischievous stories which have been circulated through the press, such stories often originating in the ignorance in the different States of the aim and operations of the others.

There is quite evidently a need for more co-operation and unity, as such attacks are directed at Australia as a nation, rather than at the particular States that might or might not be at fault. Local incidents have often been magnified into excuses for wholesale condemnation.

The Premiers Conference has already decided that centralized control is not practicable or desirable, a view entirely agreed to by the Government of Queensland. Conditions differ so in the northern as compared with the southern States; distances, say, from Canberra, are too great for many matters requiring prompt measures.

Each State can administer its own aboriginal problems more economically through its own machinery, while the establishment by a centralized government of the special machinery for such administration would prove far too costly. Moreover, each State is vitally interested in the conditions of its own aborigines because of the bearing those conditions must have upon the health, morals, and good order of the community.

In considering any united policy it will help to classify the types of aborigines to be dealt with as under:—

- (a) The primitive nomads still free to live their own life and maintain themselves on game and bush foods, and whose country is still inviolate, or has been reserved for native use;
- (b) Those still living a precarious existence on their own country, but whose lands have been selected for pastoral occupation, their maintenance by hunting restricted and often their able-bodied hunters absorbed into the pastoral industry;

(c) The detribalized, whose country has been usurped by settlement, their tribal life and natural means of subsistence destroyed, and who live a more or less mendicant life, dependent upon relief or casual employment, and are exposed to social abuses. They have lost the arts of hunting, and become accustomed to civilized foods, clothes, and amusements, their vagrant condition making them a menace to the health and morals of the community;

(d) The crossbreed. This type alone presents several different classes, each requiring special treatment:—

1. Those with a preponderance of aboriginal blood and entirely aboriginal in character and leanings.
2. The cross with lower types of alien races such as Pacific Islanders, Malays, Africans.
3. The European-aboriginal cross or those with higher Asiatic types.
4. The quadroon and octoroon with preponderance of European blood.

Drawing upon our own experience in Queensland, it has been found necessary in protection of the (a) class, to reserve for their use sufficiently large tracts of their own country to ensure the undisturbed enjoyment of their own native life and means of subsistence and protection from abuses. This alone is not sufficient. The natives have to be protected, not only from the trespasser, but also from the temptation calling at the gate, once they have tasted alien vices.

In affording this protection certain things are essential. The first is power to enforce the inviolability of the reservations and the second is benevolent supervision with authority to exercise such power, while maintaining friendly contact and affording medical and other relief. Not the least important, in fact it might be called the main aim of such supervision, should be the gradual adaptation of these nomadic people to the inevitable change to the settled life, and the raising from the soil of the subsistence previously obtained from game and bush foods which supply is steadily being diminished through the encroachment of white settlement.

In Queensland over 6,000,000 acres or 8,500 square miles of country is reserved for aborigines with strict laws to prevent trespass. This country is chiefly on Cape York Peninsula, practically the only part of the State where the primitive nomads can be said to be living their own life in their own country, and the supervision is provided by a chain of mission stations on the coast from Mornington Island to Cape York and down to Cooktown. These mission stations are all in the charge of religious bodies, as it is found that such bodies with their volunteer officers who take up the work from missionary motives, thus ensuring continuity of policy, can carry it out most economically and successfully. The superintendents are also appointed protectors of aborigines and protectors of fisheries, giving them necessary powers to protect their wards from imposition.

While the main object of the mission bodies is the spiritual care and instruction of the people, they willingly collaborate with the administration in carrying out the policy of gradual adaptation of the nomads to the settled life. Recognizing that any drastic change or forcible weaning of the old people from their tribal habits would be a hardship

and would only court failure, efforts are concentrated on the training of the children, at first the foundlings and weaklings sent voluntarily to the mission to be cared for. The mission life with its regular food, shelter, comfort and companionship soon attracts others. As these young people grow up, and are educated—the boys trained in farming, gardening, fishing and skilled trades, and the girls in domestic accomplishments suitable to their simple station—they are encouraged to mate and settle in villages, cultivate garden plots, raise pigs, poultry and bees, help in the farming, cattle-raising and fishing, and become self-supporting. Many of the young men engage as crews in the shelling industry or work vessels of their own on the communal system.

These trained young people are the best missionaries to the old nomads. Their example induces the old people to attach themselves partially to the mission, coming in from spells of "walk-about" to earn tobacco, tomahawks or knives by casual labour or bartering bush foods for trade goods or flour. They usually display interest in the young gardeners when the food crops are ripe, and would frequently eat the produce if allowed to do so.

On some of the larger reserves, out-station villages have been started on suitable river sites in the country of some of the primitive tribes hitherto untouched, by some of the trained aboriginal couples, with considerable success. The lines followed have been those of the mother mission—education of the children, and object lessons in simple husbandry. The white missionaries visit periodically for medical treatment and religious instruction.

If further evidence is needed that the primitive aboriginal is beginning to understand and appreciate the benefits of the settled village life and productive work, especially when he can see that the fruits are for his own use, the native settlement at Cowal Creek on the extreme point of Cape York can be cited. This settlement was formed twenty years ago by the remnants of the old Seven Rivers and Red Island tribes entirely of their own volition, and has been developed by their own efforts to a neat, well-laid out village of bark cottages, where the 200 inhabitants maintain themselves by gardening, hunting, fishing and gathering bush foods. The only help received from the department has been gifts of tools, fencing material, a fishing-boat on time payment, and occasionally some rations when the crops have been destroyed by wild cattle and pigs. An island native, who teaches the children and acts as missionary, is paid a small salary, but the natives govern themselves with their own councillors and police, the local protector, twenty miles away by sea, visiting once or twice a year for inspection and advice.

These village police have frequently given valuable assistance in the capture of desperate native characters on the peninsula wanted for murder, wife abduction and cattle killing.

All the foregoing reserves are vested in trustees representing the department, and the controlling church bodies, thus giving some assurance of stability of tenure and conservation of native interests.

With regard to the interest displayed overseas in the question of the preservation of the aborigines in Australia, it has been of considerable interest at this juncture to receive from a private source a copy of a circular letter written by the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society of London to various philanthropic bodies

seeking their views on a scheme they proposed to place before the Australian governments for the development of aboriginal reserves in productive industries, in trust, for the benefit of the natives.

While the society quotes the success of such trusts in other countries, the scheme is so much on all fours with the mission reserve system in Queensland as to justify the belief that the ideas in the main have come from that State's publications, especially as they quote from its annual report that £300,000 of native funds is held in trust, and suggest that this money should be borrowed and used for the furtherance of the scheme. As a matter of fact, this money amounting actually to £260,000 is the aggregate of the balances of over 6,000 individual savings bank accounts which must always be available to the owners for their benefit when required.

Although they are a different type of people from, and superior to the mainland aboriginal, being Polynesian in strain, and naturally village-dwellers and horticulturists as well as fishermen, the Torres Strait tribes, whose islands have been closely reserved, afford an example of the degree to which natives can be developed to self-dependence.

These people, numbering 3,500, entirely maintain themselves with their fleet of 26 vessels working in the shelling industry, and by gardening, pig and fowl raising and fishing. They have their own trading station, financed from their own funds with several branch retail stores. The main part of the proceeds of the fleet's catch, and wages earned by the surplus men on other fleets, amounting to about £26,000, passes through their own stores, the profits being devoted to their own benefit.

These islanders also govern their domestic affairs with their own councillors and police, elected by themselves, the only cost to the department being for administrative machinery, including school teachers and patrol vessel. As the result of the policy of segregation, these people although progressing in civilization, have achieved this development on improved native lines and not as poor imitation whites, for they still retain their native customs, arts, crafts and music.

The people of (*b*) class probably present the most difficult problem. The usurpation of their hunting grounds has resulted in destruction of their native culture and contamination from contact with the alien race. Their helpless position exposes them to temptations and vices to which they easily fall a prey, mainly because of the food poverty caused by destruction of their natural means of subsistence.

The employment of their able-bodied young people, even where such services are paid for aggravates, rather than relieves, the hardship, as few employers will accept the burden of maintaining the whole of the aged and young camp relatives of their employees.

Even where relief can be given, issues of flour, rice, tea, sugar and beef offal are inadequate substitutes for the native game and fruits of which they have been deprived.

In most places education of the children is impossible, as such benefits are unprocureable in the locality itself for the children of the employer, except at heavy expense.

The obvious and eventual solution would be to transfer all such people to institutions where the desired care, control and education could be given, but wholesale herding of tribes to strange country cannot be done without hardship. Another factor in the problem, though it should not be

urged at the expense of the native, is that, what is perhaps the most important asset of this vast Commonwealth, the pastoral industry, would be in a sorry plight if deprived of its native labour in outback places where white labour is not only difficult to obtain, but often inferior in quality. In fact it is known that many pastoralists claim that their stations could not have been developed without aboriginal labour.

Until these dispossessed people can be provided for and gradually absorbed into suitable reservations, it is essential that effective legal and supervisory machinery be provided to protect them from abuse and imposition and to ensure relief from privation and disease. The young should also receive education of a vocational character to equip them to protect themselves in business dealings and enhance their value in employment.

The (c) class referred to as detribalized will be found mostly on the outskirts of country towns and mining camps. Many have never known any different environment, in fact, have little knowledge of native culture. What they know of hunting has depended upon civilized firearms; they cannot live without European food and clothing, or amuse themselves outside of the hotel, the billiard room, pictures or racecourse.

Although usually asserting their ability to look after their own earnings, they are invariably in need of protection from their own ignorance and improvidence.

The moral tone of these camps is often lower than that of the more primitive classes, as this type of people is usually too sophisticated to be controlled by the native laws and the moral code of the superior race. Consequently, the majority of the inmates are of mixed breed, many of the children are illegitimate, being lucky if their parents are of the same nationality and are living together. The unattached females, however, are much in demand for domestic servants, and the males as station hands, drovers and for fencing, scrub-felling, horse-breaking, and contract work. This makes the removal of the unemployed dependants who are left behind in the camps a difficult matter.

Usually State school education is available for these children, whose attendance is compulsory, but objections at times are raised by the parents of white children because of the alleged unhealthy tone of the camp home life. To meet this objection, where numbers justify establishing a separate school, this has frequently been done.

It will be obvious that in the case of this type of native the need is for effective protection and supervision of these camp dependants, ensuring—

1. Sanitary living conditions.
2. Protection from abuse.
3. Moral control.
4. Support of their dependants by the able-bodied.
5. Proper upbringing of the children.

This has been met in Queensland either by establishing a village on reserved land a reasonable distance from the town, where the families have been helped to erect decent huts, enclose grounds, make gardens, provide water supply and sanitary conveniences, also school facilities if needed; or by transferring the families to a suitable settlement where the above conditions can be assured under efficient supervision.

The first measure is adopted where conditions are favorable as inflicting less hardship.

It is perhaps in regard to this class more than any others that drastic measures are needed for moral control and protection of females and sup-

pression of miscegenation. The whole environment creates a taste for the delights of civilized life that are an irresistible snare to them, making them an easy prey to the unscrupulous white or alien.

In Queensland, for a quarter of a century, the marriage of whites and blacks has been rigidly restricted, and every encouragement has been given to marriage of crossbred aboriginals amongst their own race. The result is that 95 per cent. of the crossbred children born are the issue of purely native unions, and 80 per cent. of these are born in wedlock.

There is wide difference of opinion as to what is due to the so-called half-caste, but, as already pointed out, not every half-breed is the child of a white father. Many may be of half aboriginal blood, but wholly aboriginal in nature and leanings.

This type, and those crosses of lower alien races, will be more happily absorbed by their mother's people in circumstances where they can be given vocational and domestic training to take their part in the development of a self-contained native community.

The superior type of half-breed, with the necessary intelligence and ambition for the higher civilized life, is entitled to the opportunity and help to make his place in the white community. But we must not be disappointed if what appears to be ambition turns out only to be a desire for freedom from supervision.

The system in Queensland provides for granting exemption to half-castes shown to be intelligent and well-conducted, and not living or associating with aboriginals. But perhaps 50 per cent. of such cases have nothing to show after years of freedom, live from hand to mouth, often on the dole, and frequently drift back to camp life, where they have to look for wives.

The case of these superior crossbreeds has exercised our department for some time, and, as the result of exhaustive inquiries in other countries and States, it has been decided that it is futile to expect these crossbreeds, no matter how light in colour, to successfully make a place for themselves in the civilized community without being equipped with the vocational knowledge and the respectable home background to overcome the handicap of the racial prejudice and inferiority complex. Without such equipment they cannot combat the drift to the ranks of the unemployed and to life in the slums.

Briefly, the scheme approved by my department, and of which a trial is soon to be given by the establishment of a half-caste industrial colony, is—

1. Industrial and social development of present settlements for full-blood and inferior type of half-castes.
2. Establishment of half-caste colonies for superior types of half-castes and quadroons now labouring under handicaps as in (1), ensuring—
 - Education for the children.
 - Benevolent supervision of community life.
 - Opportunities for protected home life and home industries.
 - Medical and health supervision.
 - Secondary vocational training for youths.
3. System of apprenticeship of rural school trainees to civilized trades or professions in safe home influence with co-operation of the State Children's and Apprenticeship Committee.

4. Special consideration to the uplifting of the living conditions of station-bred aboriginals, half-castes and quadroons and provision of educational facilities.

I think it is generally recognized that the care of the aboriginal, no matter what the breed, is, to a large degree, a health problem. The prevention of disease amongst these people is of vital importance to the welfare of the white community as well as a duty that may be owed to the natives themselves who are often victims of our own social vices.

As the native's own natural food resources are becoming exhausted so he is forced to substitute the artificial foods of civilized life of whose nutriment value, in his ignorance, he has no knowledge. Thus we find him often subsisting on polished rice, refined white flour, tea and sugar, instead of the game, roots and fruits of the bush which in his wild days provided him with a balanced diet.

The question of proper nutrition is an important, and at times a difficult one, for it is one thing to order a balanced ration for your native, but quite another thing to make him eat it. Another result of the change to civilized food is the increasing need for dental attention. Probably half of the civilized natives, especially half-breeds, have at an early age to be provided with artificial teeth or fillings.

In imposing the laws of the white man's government upon the native, too little consideration has in the past been given to the degree which the influence of his native code may have had upon his actions. The need for a special court for natives, on the lines of the Children's Court, in which the Bench can be assisted by officers or persons experienced in native customs and laws, has more than once been emphasized. Already in some States, legislation provides for defence of primitive offenders and the safe-guarding of such prisoners from ignorant pleas of guilty.

In the event of a uniform policy being adopted it will greatly facilitate administration throughout the various States if uniform legislation can also be framed for the suppression of abuses, protection from exploitation, and check of the traffic in drink and drugs.

If, similarly, the various State administrations can co-operate for mutual assistance in such matters as controlling the migrations of indigent natives, the return of absconders from settlements, the tracing of wife deserters and stranded natives, it will materially assist in the effective care of these people. I am able to acknowledge with gratitude much useful help in the past from the aborigines departments of neighbouring States in the above direction.

Like other social questions, the effectiveness of the measures for the betterment of the races is largely dependent upon finance. Unfortunately, the aboriginal has no vote, and in the past the work has been often discouragingly retarded because of the State government's inability to spare the necessary funds. Queensland has probably been more generously treated by its government in the matter of financial provision than some other States, but the dependence of the department upon the political and financial position has often been an obstacle to progress in the work of ameliorating the conditions of the distressed.

As already stated, the inevitable depletion of the natural food resources makes it essential that the now nomadic natives should be steadily taught to develop for themselves a settled community life

in conditions and with such practical assistance as will enable them to attain a measure of self-dependence.

Experience has shown that this help should not be confined to supplying their physical needs, but rather should be in directions to enable them to become self-supporting. Help in cash is of course essential, especially in the early development stages, to pay for cost of management, but practical help is also needed in the way of material, plant, machinery and stock to enable the productive industries to be developed as fully as possible towards self-support and the uplifting of the people on improved native lines by their own efforts.

The suggestion is, therefore, offered to this Conference that the Commonwealth Government, which is the parent government of this continent, and the one looked to by the people overseas as responsible for the proper treatment of the aboriginal races, might consider the question of assisting the development of the existing and future aboriginal communities by making available an adequate annual grant to be devoted to purely capital expenditure in approved directions towards development towards self-support.

SUMMARY OF PAST ABORIGINAL POLICY.

In reviewing the conditions 30 years ago and the progress made since that time, it is shown that the results could not have been achieved without an objective.

Summarized, the policy in the past has been—

- (a) To keep the few primitive natives who are still living the nomadic life under benevolent supervision by affording medical and other relief, to win their confidence and through the children gradually induce them to adapt themselves to the inevitable change to the settled industrious life.
- (b) Recognizing that with the encroachment of civilization on their hunting grounds it is only a question of time when the nomadic life will be impossible, the aim has been to establish them in time, without undue wrench from their old environment, in self-contained villages under a simple form of self-government helped by benevolent instruction in husbandry.
- (c) To secure for the semi-civilized natives of Torres Strait the opportunity to develop to a higher social life and self-dependence on improved native lines, avoiding Europeanization as far as possible, and to protect them from contamination and exploitation.
- (d) To afford the detribalized, that is, the wandering natives whose country has already been usurped, effective protection from abuses and exploitation in their contact with civilization.
- (e) To provide accessible machinery for medical treatment and relief, to take measures for the discovery, prevention, isolation and treatment of disease, and for the promotion of better health conditions in the interests of the European as well as aboriginal community.
- (f) To assist troublesome, degraded and destitute aborigines and half-castes to rehabilitate themselves in Government controlled institutions of a semi-penitentiary nature, and develop to social and industrial self-dependence.
- (g) To assist the crossbreeds of superior breed and inclinations to overcome their social handicaps and fit themselves by education

and technical training to take their place properly equipped in the white community.

- (h) Generally, to assist all classes of the aboriginal races to win to a position of self-respect and self-dependence.

Mr. BAILEY.—I suggest that further consideration of the matter introduced by Mr. Bleakley be postponed until after the luncheon adjournment.

PROPOSED SOCIO-ECONOMIC INVESTIGATION OF THE HALF-CASTE PROBLEM.

PROFESSOR CLELAND.—It is clear to me, after hearing Mr. Bleakley's statement, that conditions differ considerably in the various States, and that what may be applicable to high-rainfall areas in Cape York Peninsula, may not be applicable to the dry western portions of South Australia. I have prepared a memorandum embodying certain suggestions for an investigation into conditions as they exist in South Australia, and it is possible that some of the conclusions finally reached may conflict with those reached by Mr. Bleakley. The memorandum is as follows:—

The number of half-castes in certain parts of Australia is increasing, not as a result of additional influx of white blood, but following on inter-marriage amongst themselves, where they are living under protected conditions, such as at the Government aboriginal stations at Point Pearce and Point McLeay, in South Australia. This may be the beginning of a possible problem of the future. A very unfortunate situation would arise if a large half-caste population breeding within themselves eventually arose in any of the Australian States. It seems to me that there can be only one satisfactory solution to the half-caste problem, and that is the ultimate absorption of these persons in the white population. I think that this will not necessarily lead in any way to a deterioration of type, inasmuch as racial inter-mixtures seem, in most cases, to lead to increased virility.

The problem, however, should be faced at its beginning, and it is suggested that the whole question of the half-caste should be thoroughly investigated by some person specially trained in the study of social and of economic problems. Such a survey would include ascertaining the conditions under which these people live in the neighbourhood of country towns, on stations, and on government reserves. The best kind of occupation for these people, for instance, on cattle and sheep stations, or on farms, and the various possibilities for technical education should also be inquired into.

The investigation should also consider the best method for the gradual absorption of the half-caste into the community, going thoroughly into the question as to whether half-castes in general can assume responsibility and be reliable, or whether, on an average, they must be considered as belonging to the submerged, more or less, unemployable type of white. It is also advisable that some scheme should be got out by which the two sexes can have opportunities of meeting and so marrying under suitable conditions.

Such, in brief outline, is the suggested scope of such a socio-economic investigation. Such a work could be begun with great advantage in South Australia, and I have the permission of the Vice-Chancellor to say that the Council of the University of Adelaide would view favorably

any suggestions submitted to it that such a survey should be carried out under the direction of its Department of Economics in conjunction with the Board for Anthropological Research of the University.

Though I have not express authority to say so, I have reason to think that the State would grant special facilities for the investigation. As the problem is one of value, not only to South Australia, but to most of the other States as well, and to the Commonwealth, I would suggest that the special expenses incurred—I think £1,000 a year for two years would probably be necessary—might be reasonably borne by the Commonwealth Government.

As far as the southern States are concerned, investigations could, I believe, be best carried out in South Australia, and the University in that State is prepared to undertake the direction of the work. It would be necessary, of course, to appoint a special investigator, who would have to be paid. The State would make available all the facilities it could, but I think that the actual expenses should be borne by the Commonwealth, as the results of the investigation would be for the benefit of the Commonwealth as a whole. If necessary, the work could ultimately be extended to the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland. It is very important to ascertain whether the half-caste is able to take his place in the community under present conditions, or whether, on the average, he will always prove to be only a grown-up child who will have to be protected and nursed.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LEGISLATION.

Mr. NEVILLE.—The opinion held by Western Australian authorities is that the problem of the native race, including half-castes, should be dealt with on a long-range plan. We should ask ourselves what will be the position, say, 50 years hence; it is not so much the position to-day that has to be considered. Western Australia has gone further in the development of such a long-range policy than has any other State, by accepting the view that ultimately the natives must be absorbed into the white population of Australia. That is the principal objective of legislation which was passed by the Parliament of Western Australia in its last session. I followed closely the long debates which accompanied the passage of that measure, and although some divergence was, at times, displayed, most members expressed the view that sooner or later the native and the white populations of Australia must become merged. The Western Australian law to which I have referred is based on the presumption that the aborigines of Australia sprang from the same stock as we did ourselves; that is to say, they are not negroid, but give evidence of Caucasian origin. I think that the Adelaide Anthropological Board has voiced the opinion that there is no such thing as atavism in the aboriginal, and Dr. Cilento has expressed the view to which I have referred. We have accepted that view in Western Australia.

In Western Australia the problem of the aborigines has three phases. In the far-north there are between 7,000 and 8,000 pure-blooded aborigines; in the middle-north the number of half-castes is increasing, and the full-blooded aborigines are becoming detribalized, and in the south-west there are about 5,000 coloured people. We have dropped the use of the term "half-caste". As a matter of fact, in the legislation passed last session the term "aborigines" has been discarded altogether; we refer to them as natives whether they be full-blooded or half-caste. Quadroons over the age of 21 years are, however, excluded. From childhood quadroons are to be

treated as whites. In my State there are several institutions for the treatment of the natives, including eleven missions and a number of departmental establishments. At the mission stations, the natives are encouraged to multiply by marriage, with a consequent increase of population. The missions are thus able to claim that they are doing valuable work for the natives. Undoubtedly they are doing good work, but they keep an increasing number of natives on their properties, whereas the departmental institutions, whilst approving marriages, encourage the natives to mix with the general community, and earn their own living which, I am glad to say, they are doing. As a matter of fact, for some years now I have not been able to supply sufficient youngsters of both sexes to meet the demand for their labour.

As I have pointed out, the policy of the missions is in direct contrast to that of the department, because they do not encourage the young people born on the mission properties to leave them. The ultimate result of this policy in Western Australia will be an increase of the number of coloured people, that is, half-castes, and a diminution of the number of full-blooded aborigines. It seems to me that the task which confronts us is educating and training these people to enable them to be assimilated into the white community. Accordingly we have taken steps to improve the health and physical fitness of the coloured population. At present only about 10 per cent. of these people show any sign of ill-health, and the majority of the complaints from which they may suffer are trifling. This has been ascertained over two or three years of intensive medical inspection.

If the coloured people of this country are to be absorbed into the general community they must be thoroughly fit and educated at least to the extent of the three R's. If they can read, write and count, and know what wages they should get, and how to enter into an agreement with an employer, that is all that should be necessary. Once that is accomplished there is no reason in the world why these coloured people should not be absorbed into the community. To achieve this end, however, we must have charge of the children at the age of six years; it is useless to wait until they are twelve or thirteen years of age. In Western Australia we have power under the act to take any child from its mother at any stage of its life, no matter whether the mother be legally married or not. It is, however, our intention to establish sufficient settlements to undertake the training and education of these children so that they may become absorbed into the general community.

Another important point is marriage. I realize that the problem in Queensland, as outlined by Mr. Bleakley, is different; but the natives in Western Australia are mostly of "purer" stock. There is some Asiatic blood in the north, and a certain amount of negroid strain also is to be seen due to the fact that some of the early settlers brought with them to Western Australia negro servants who left their mark on the native population. The negro strain remains. The Asiatic cross, however, is not a bad one. We find that half-caste Asiatics do very well indeed; in fact, very often they beat the white cross. In order that the existing state of affairs in Western Australia shall continue, and in order to prevent the return of those half-castes who are nearly white to the black, the State Parliament has enacted legislation including the giving of control over the marriages of half-castes. Under this law no half-caste need be allowed to marry a full-blooded aboriginal if it is possible to avoid it, but the missions do not always take steps to prevent this from occurring; they allow the half-castes under their control to marry anybody.

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Dr. MORRIS.—You cannot stop them from having babies even if they don't marry.

Mr. NEVILLE.—We realize that. As a matter of fact that very often does occur as the result of half-castes mingling with whites; but that does not matter very much. What does matter is that, when a child is born and the father cannot be found, the child becomes a charge upon the State.

Another matter upon which we differ from Queensland is in the fundamental character of the natives. Mr. Bleakley has mentioned settlements and cultivation; our experience is that one can never make a farmer out of a native—seldom even out of a half-caste. In Western Australia blocks of land have been granted to the natives and all that they have done is to build humpies and then sit down. Without constant supervision it is impossible to make them cultivate land. Then we have the important difference between the female and the male. In furtherance of the scheme which we have in view, we have definitely excluded from certain provisions of the act a male adult person of half-blood who is living more or less like a white man. We give him the benefit of the doubt, and tell him that so long as he does certain things and conforms to the act we shall not worry about him. In other words, we give him a chance to enter into the communal life of the State. Many have taken advantage of this provision and have done so. However, it is a gradual process to merge the two races. As I have explained, in Western Australia we have full-blooded aborigines, half-castes from detribalized blacks, and half-castes producing their own children. In the lower half of the State we are approaching the stage where half-castes will be able to be assimilated. It will be, perhaps, 25 years before the same stage is reached in the middle north, and 50 years in the far north. In any case there is no reason why we should not adopt a long-sighted policy.

An important aspect of this policy is the cost. The different States are creating institutions for the welfare of the native race, and, as the result of this policy, the native population is increasing. What is to be the limit? Are we going to have a population of 1,000,000 blacks in the Commonwealth, or are we going to merge them into our white community and eventually forget that there ever were any aborigines in Australia? There are not many now, whereas not so many generations ago there were a great many. When Western Australia was first settled in 1829 it is alleged that there was a population within the State of 55,000 natives. In the south-west portion of the State alone there were 13,000 natives. In 1901 the native population in the south-west was reduced to 1,419, of whom 45 per cent. were half-castes. To-day there are nearly 6,000 natives in the same area, so I venture the opinion that in 25 years' time the native population in that district alone will have increased to 15,000. How can we keep them apart from the community? Our own population is not increasing at such a rapid rate as to lead us to expect that there will be a great many more white people in that area 25 years hence than there are at present. The aborigines have inter-married with our people. I know of some 80 white men who are married to native women, with whom they are living happy, contented lives, so I see no objection to the ultimate absorption into our own race of the whole of the existing Australian native race. In order to do this we must guard the health of the natives in every possible way so that they may be, physically, as fit as is possible. The children must be trained as we would train our own children. The stigma at present attaching to half-castes must be banished. In Western Australia half-caste boys and men take part in football, cricket and other games on a footing equal to that of their white clubmates, but are excluded from the