

AUSTRALIA'S COLOURED MINORITY

Its Place in the Community

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GLOSSARY

AUTHORITY –

Department of State or Board concerned with Native Affairs –
Government of any Australian State.

BLACK –

A term often applied to the Aboriginal, though the pigmentation of the
Aboriginal is not black but dark chocolate brown.

CANBERRA CONFERENCE –

Aboriginal Welfare – Initial Conference of Commonwealth and State

Aboriginal Authorities

held at Canberra 21st to 23rd April, 1937.

COLOURED PEOPLE –

People of Aboriginal descent but not of the full-blood.

FULL-BLOOD –

Pure-blood Aboriginal of Australia.

HALF-BLOOD, HALF-CASTE –

Off-spring of full-blood Aboriginal and a white person.

Offspring of two persons both half-blood.

INSTITUTION –

All Native Settlements, Stations, Hospitals, Depots, and Missions for
Natives.

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT –

The Government of the Commonwealth of Australia.

NATIVES –

The people of the Australia race, including those not of full-blood.

OCTOROON –

Offspring of Quadroon and White parents.

QUADROON –

Offspring of Half-blood and White parents.

Offspring of two persons both Quadroons.

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INTRODUCTION

AUSTRALIA'S population includes nearly 30,000 people of mixed White and Aboriginal descent, usually referred to as "half-castes". Better terms would be mixed-bloods, part-Aborigines (part-Whites!) or Coloured Folk. Strictly speaking, half-caste means having equal proportions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestry. But many Coloured Folk are three-quarter caste (usually classified with full-bloods), quarter-caste (quadroon), or eighth-caste (octoroon), meaning that they possess respectively three-quarter, one-quarter, or one-eighth Aboriginal ancestry.

The use of the term caste (half or other), however is effective if it reminds us that we divide our population into Australians proper (that is, our white selves) ; full-blood, who incidentally, are not included in the general census figures ; and, thought and social behaviour, the Aboriginal castes or mixed-bloods. These last are in our midst, and partly of our blood, but they are not yet "of us". They work and earn wages, provided that there is more work available than our own workers require, or provided that it is work our men and women do not want. But with few

exceptions, they are not part of our economic, let alone our social, recreational and religious life. The lighter castes realise this. Here and there are families who have established themselves in the general community. They feel that they must keep themselves apart from other Coloured Folk, or they will be relegated again to the "outer", to the "half-caste" group – and so be in the position of outcastes.

Only recently, a Coloured team won the football competition in a thriving Victorian country town. The "half-castes" are this year banned from entering the competition. They are cast out, and must play within their own caste. To use a present-day expression, our white folk "could not take it". These supposedly "inferior" people proved themselves our superior in sport. Our dignity is hurt, prejudice surges up and overwhelms the spirit of sportsmanship on which Australians pride themselves. Apart, then, from the matter of descent, the Coloured Folk are "half-caste" partly in, and partly out of, our society, but often outcastes.

In many instances, they struggle to improve themselves economically and socially, but they often give up the struggle very soon. Prejudice is an almost impossible barrier to break down. They sense, and indeed are made to see, that they are not wanted within the compact residential areas of a

town ; their place is in the straggling parts, especially if houses are so dilapidated that whites will not live in them. Apart from this, they must build humpies on the town common near the rubbish dump or river bank. In most cases this causes in them a feeling of being unwanted, of being but rubbish in the opinion of the ruling or white caste – the townspeople. In addition it gives rise to attitudes of cheekiness or servility, and, in modern jargon, to inferiority complexes.

Moreover, how can these folk be clean, have decent furniture and good clothes when living in such circumstances? And yet many of them do manage to live respectably and to be as clean in person and dress as most of the general population but because they live in these wretched circumstances, they are looked askance. In particular, their children are not wanted at State schools. The phenomenon is commonplace of "strikes" or threatened "strikes" on the part of white parents in country towns to keep their children away from school if "Aboriginal" (usually only quadroon and octoroon or lighter) children are allowed to attend the same school. This means that separate schools must be established for the mixed-blood children, sometimes within a mile or two of the public schools. In addition, representative opinion in town after town urges mixed-bloods in or near it to be put together further out on Government-

run Settlements. A hostile reception meets any suggestion that these folk, including many with war service, should be freed from the prohibition on Aborigines entering hotel bars – and this in spite of the fact that the facility to drink in hotels would remove the temptation to drink inferior grog and methylated spirits, which are “peddled” to them by unscrupulous white men.

In very many country towns too, they must sit in a special part of the picture theatres, usually right up in front, on pain of being asked to leave. In the metropolitan cities, they gravitate to the slum areas, where they can go their own ways. And finally, until very recently, and in a small degree, the various Churches have done very little to bring them into the Communion of worship and friendship. Christianity has been represented to them mainly by one or two undenominational Mission organisations, with no local social and economic ties.

Thus, in every aspect of life, the Coloured Folk are made to feel that they belong to a lower caste. Of course, an attempt is made to justify this in various ways : they are not educated ; not clean ; not normal ; not steady at work ; cannot “hold their drink,” and live in undesirable conditions. All this is true in many cases, but does not the cause lie in our prejudices and assumption, and in our refusal to apply the ordinary laws, regulations, and

sanctions to them, as well as to afford them the normal privileges of citizenship? Instead, we assign them to a separate Department of State, the Aborigines' Welfare or Protection Department, with special Acts, Officers, Reserves, Settlements. And there is no doubt in view of the ice-barrier of bias which meets those of them who strive to improve their position, such help is necessary. The solution to the “Half-caste” problem, however, lies not with Boards and Commissioners, but with ourselves. While we hold the mixed-bloods at arm's length, few of them will rise in the social and economic scale ; they will be hangers-on and parasites. The circle is a vicious one. Let us break it. This means enforcing *through the same channels as in the case of our own white folk*, decent housing, cleanliness, regular school attendance in our schools (as at Alice Springs, for example, orderly behaviour and voting. At the same time, it means opening to them the door of opportunity through higher education, through training for professions (teaching, nursing, and other) through membership of trade unions (wherever this is barred), and in recreation and Church life.

My suggestion is to try another circle, this one not “vicious”, but centred on the conviction that, apart from individual variations, all human beings, irrespective of skin-pigmentation and ancestry, are

Born with like potentialities for living worthily, intelligently and happily. Whether they realise this goal or not, depends on the community into which they are born. In the case of the "half-castes" it depends on us. Are they to be a lower caste or to live the ordinary life of Australian citizens? Citizens in law they are in some parts of the continent, but not in their social relationships ; and without the latter, the former is but an empty vessel – a tinkling cymbal.

The most interesting feature of the "half-caste" problem is that local public opinion lags behind official policy in some parts of Australia – in New South Wales, for example. In that State, assimilation has been written into the Aborigines' Act since 1939, and moulds or initiates all decisions made by the Welfare Board : thus, the Welfare Officer System, with cadets being trained at Sydney University as well as in the field, to act in the general community as "liaison officers" between Coloured and White, is one means being tried to overcome that lag, and to get the community's help in the process of assimilation. It is realised that the problem is a personal one – one of human relations, rather than of administration.

In other parts of the Commonwealth, too, the Native Affairs Departments seek the same goal. They do so because, in spite of local opinion, assimilation of the mixed-bloods into pour social and

economic life and structure is inevitable. They are themselves striving for it. They realise that contentment and sufficiency will Only be attained when they become part of the general community. But this does not mean that they are planning, or even desiring, to marry white partners. Except in the case of very light castes, this seldom occurs ; usually, they marry within their own "half" with "half", quadroon with quadroon, and so on, with few marriages outside, including with whites.

The assimilation sought and necessary is into the general economic, recreational and religious life of Australia, and if we can forget, at least in their case, our antipathy to darkish skin colour and broad noses, this assimilation will be realised in two or three generations.

The "half-caste" problem is a challenge to our sense of fairness and fitness. And what is more, our Coloured Folk are themselves throwing down the challenge. They are now vocal ; they have their leagues and associations ; and those of us who hitherto have done the talking, can now become guides and philosophers to those who would fight their own "battles", and thus gain self-respect. "Rights, not Charity" is their slogan – but the "Rights" they need are not so much legally based as humanly inspired.

It is because the author of this book, Mr. A.O. Neville, is fully seized with the necessity of the policy of assimilation that I gladly contribute this introduction. For twenty-five years he administered the Department of Native Affairs in Western Australia. Then in the quiet of retirement, and away from the scene of his former activity, but while still keen and fit to serve, he has pondered over the lot of the Coloured Folk. From his store of experience he has given us a valuable picture of their position in the West, and on the basis of it, and of his study of the problem in the other States, he has outlined a policy for Australia-wide implementation. I am of course, pleased that it agrees in the main with what was suggested in my "Citizenship for the Aborigines", written about the same time as Mr. Neville wrote this book, but published earlier (1944).

One interesting aspect of the book is its slightly autobiographical nature. Civil Servants must often wish that they could tell to the world the frustrations they experience in carrying out the policy of their departments, caused by the Minister, the Treasurer, or the pressure some group. In this book we get a few glimpses of this aspect of administrative work, as well as of other factors which have had a bearing on the author's work.

I would like to express here my appreciation of the very real help Mr. Neville afforded me when

engaged in anthropological field work in Western Australia for the Australian National Research Council, and to others who worked there under my direction. The head of the appropriate Department can do much to help scientists in their work, "making the wheels run smoothly" and even lessening overhead expense. And Mr. Neville did this.

I recommend *Australia's Coloured Minority* to all Australians, those who are interested, and those that ought to be – that is, the rest. I welcome the book as an ally in the movement to bring Australia's Coloured Minority Group into its rightful heritage of a full and rich life of social privilege, responsibility and opportunity.

A.P. ELKIN.

University of Sydney,
March 27th, 1947.

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THE CHARGE

THIS book is about the coloured people of Australia, but of necessity their full-blood relations, both white and black, must come into the picture to some extent.

I make no apologies for writing the book, because there are things which need to be said. So few of our own people as a whole are aware of the position. Yet we have had the coloured man amongst us for a hundred years and more. He has died in his hundreds, nay thousands, in pain, misery, and squalor, and through avoidable ill-health. Innumerable little children have perished through neglect and ignorance. The position, in some vital respects, is not much better to-day than it was fifty years ago. Man is entitled to a measure of happiness in this life. Yet most of these people have never known real happiness. Some are never likely to know it. The causes of their condition are many. Mainly it is not their fault, it is ours, just as it lies with us to put the matter right.

Speaking in Perth recently, Mr. W.Y.T. Sao, Chinese Consul, said, "Real happiness means living without worry ; with peace in your soul. Mankind should aim at this form of happiness."

Very true, but the provision of food, clothing and physical necessities alone will not give peace

in your soul. You cannot experience this happy state when you are excluded from the amenities and graces of life, when perpetual go slights are rankling, when your children cannot go to school or to church, when you cannot even go to the cinema and pay to sit where you like – yet the coloured people of other races may do all these things at will – when you are stared at, jeered at in life and made an object of ridicule in illustrated papers. Welfare is not merely the possession of all material necessities, it connotes security, friendly intercourse, something to think about and something to take pride in – and best of all. Perhaps, the vision of a future now sadly lacking. Given all these then, perhaps, our native people might have “peace in their souls.”

Our native people, though never slaves in the same sense as were the American negroes, are in many respects much less emancipated, in that, unlike the negro, to-day they cannot enjoy all the things we enjoy ; they are still a people apart. Even when legally free to do as they please, there are reasons why they cannot at present.

Governments are not solely to blame for this existing state of affairs ; we are all parties to it. Possibly a State Government which dared to do the right thing to its fullest extent would no longer command the confidence of the public. It would be said “our own people come first” ; indeed, that has been said. That in itself is a specious argument.

Who should come first if it isn't the real owners of the land, its first possessors?

We are all newcomers to them, dispossessors, despoilers. Having given them all they needed physically, spiritually, and educationally, then we might have been justified in looking after our own interest. That was the original intention – but it was not fulfilled. If it had been, there would be no native question now. Instead we gradually took all they had, then cast them aside except in so far as they could help or be useful to us. We have exploited them, and all along they have been too feeble to few to resist – that is, to set up a unified moral or physical resistance as representing their people as a whole. They have no leaders amongst themselves able to unite them and to fight their battles. That was recognised from the first – because we selected suitable persons from amongst ourselves to watch over their interests.

But how far that system succeeded depended again upon what Governments were prepared to do to support those persons – and too often the outlook of those whose duty it was to watch over the interests of the natives, was influenced by a desire not to offend the whites, or even to pander the whites while allegedly protecting the blacks. Few such persons have been entirely free and untrammelled in their efforts, particularly when paid or part-paid by Government. But there have been

those who regardless of self have done all they possibly could to point the way, and it is no fault of theirs that their advice has not always been taken. Such matters are influenced by the effect its acceptance might have upon the public finances, the good name of the Government or State and its people. Whether such and such would be a good policy – from our point of view, mark you – whether a thing has been right as to the effect it would have upon the native people, has alas! Not always been a deciding factor.

Years ago the Imperial Government reluctantly entrusted the care of the natives to the new self-governing Colonies – reluctantly, because the Colonies had not shown up to that time that they knew how to care for the aborigines.

The Colonies (later to become the Federated States) having accepted that care, then severally became guardians of the native people throughout Australia, and none has made a very good job of it ; some have indeed fallen down on the job. Mean-time the Imperial Government has shown through its Colonial Administration a better understanding of such problems than we have.

Some of to-day's writers have criticised past Administrations. That may be all very well, but surely you have got to live in the times and be associated with the people to be aware of the difficulties then to be faced and the reasons prompting their actions. Post-dated criticism is profitless. Of

Course, mistakes were made and are still and will be made. It is given to no one to see the future or possess a completely clear vision of the effects of differing methods. Only time can prove the success or not of these, therefore, we should not be overly critical of what was done in the right spirit, though we can try to discover what went wrong with the methods. Moreover, we must be realistic – the heart should not overrule the head in such matters.

In drawing attention to various phases of the matter past and present, these writers have not indicated a specific way out – they have said what should be done, but not how to do it. I want to deal with the present as I see it, and try to point a way to the future.

The experience of war has brought about changes which will leave little room for the native to pursue his existence in the manner of his forbears ; his emergence into civilization or acceptance of a fuller civilisation is being forced upon him whether he likes it or not. We must see that his progress is properly guided by those who understand his limitations and capabilities. He, like the rest, must have his chance when we settle down – must have a place in the scheme of things.

Initially the coloured people must be lifted out of the rut of despairing futility, the utter purposelessness of their lives, the deadening effects of their inferiority complex. No longer must they

be left sitting forlornly by their camp fires waiting for death to claim and disintegrate their tired, emaciated bodies.

In war-time the native question in Australia receded into the dim distance. Little was published in the Press about the trouble and feuds of the natives, and official reports and data, if not altogether relegated to a brighter future, were not published as in peace-time. During such periods the excuse of lack of funds occasions a pull upon the purse strings. Thus the question sinks into partial oblivion until hostilities cease, only to be dragged once again into the foreground. Indeed it forces itself upon our notice by its very obviousness.

In times of war too, when so many of our own men are in the fighting forces, natives secure more work than usual – often only to be thrown out again when the men get back ; so that social conditions became no better for them and their women and children.

There are still many amongst us, including men in authority, who regard the native as a “static” being, incapable of advancement and still living in the stone age. To a large extent he is not, but if he were, whose fault is it?

Long before the Canberra Conference, we in the West had considered and discarded those other alternatives put forward to absorption or assimilation,

referred to as segregation, village settlements and proposals of a like nature, having for their central idea the “living apart” of the natives from the rest of the community. Bitter experience had brought some of us to a change of outlook in this direction.

All concerned, interested societies, even the Press, were coming round to the idea that the proper course lay quite in an opposite direction. So our new legislation was framed with that ideal as the basis of a future policy – not to be hastily enforced, but visioning a long-range plan beginning with those first showing signs of fitness for the innovation. A process of evolution indeed!

We went to the Canberra Conference pledged to that policy. It was an item on the agenda forwarded from the West which gave rise to the discussion which resulted in the now famous resolution:

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.

Being a long-range policy the process must needs be gradual, so a formula having been evolved for

the people considered ready to be trained for absorption it became necessary to provide for those not yet ready, but who in the course of time would attain the same degree of civilisation as those first considered. Then followed, in natural sequence, the other resolutions covering detribalised natives and others yet remaining in the bush.

SUPERVISION OF FULL-BLOOD NATIVES : – That this conference affirms the principle that the general policy in respect to full-blood natives should be :-

- (a) To educate to white standard, children of the detribalised 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 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 unemployed 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 uncivilised 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.

No neglect of the three full-blood classes was thus implied. It merely placed the people in evolutionary order looking at it from the point of view of assimilation – the future of all the native people being under consideration.

The aboriginal in the bush still has his hunting pursuits, his culture and ancient shibboleths to keep him happily occupied.

The detribalised full-blood has his work and interests and has no need to worry about the future of himself and his children. He is not entirely rid of his old associations and restrictions and still complies when called upon to do so – though somewhat sceptical of their efficacy – with native practice and ritual.

Each of these is a separate problem as taken into account at the Canberra Conference, but hardly needs quite the same urgent consideration demanded of us as towards the utterly dispossessed derelict, unclassed coloured people euphoniously termed half-caste or half-blood. Not all of these are in this depressed condition. Some, advanced to white status, have already become completely merged into the community and are leading its customary life. But the great majority are still either as I describe them, living on the fringe of society in institutions or camps, or are wanderers with no fixed abode.

The position of the coloured man is not that of the full-blood. He is ready for advancement and separate training.

To hasten our plan unduly will only aggravate the position, and the last state of the native might be worse than the first if we should begin well and then let up on our efforts. We must, having once embarked upon the plan, be persistent in following it, let no one divert us from our course, and ensure that our successors follow our lead. The trouble up to the time before the Conference was that no one had given the lead ; lots of people had tried methods of a like nature, but none had been based on a far-sighted plan of operations. Even since the Canberra Conference, although a measure of unity has been striven for, differences in policy have arisen which can jeopardise the whole

plan. That is not to be wondered at in view of the lack of co-ordination, the failure to confer further on this problem as others confer annually on their particular problems. Railway, Police, Agricultural, Forestry, and a host of other Administrative Officials periodically hasten to Canberra to confer and agree upon co-operative effort, organised planning and what not, but not so those concerned with the affairs of a larger number of human beings whose interests are surely as important as those of some of the activities annually discussed.

Of course, these interests do not affect us as a whole – yet – but they will, when perhaps we shall consider them as often as we do others – and regret that we did not do so sooner.

Expediency has too often deterred us from doing what we ought to have done, and still refrain from doing.

Madam Chiang Kai-Shek, in speaking to the American Congress at Washington, said that she hoped that at the Peace Table the United Nations would not be “obtunded” by expediency. The unusual word, meaning to reduce the edge or to dull the pungency or violence of a thing, might well be used to illustrate the history of various State's efforts in relation to the native population. These throughout have been obtunded by expediency and still are. It is that we have to get away from if we are to do any good.

Perhaps we are afraid of offending some sections of the community – treading on their corns – losing votes. We cannot, however, be fearful of the effect of fair dealing by our native people, but we ought to be very fearful of the effects of our neglect. And so we are when touches us closely – we have shown that in our belated attempt to stamp out disease in the North. Money has been forthcoming for that – why? Because we are afraid of disease spreading to ourselves – afraid the disease would lose us many useful cheap workers in the pastoral industry. If we could be fearful of some ulterior effect upon ourselves in denying our native people education and training, spiritual consolation, efficient and sufficient medical, hospital and maternity and childhood facilities, I feel sure we should soon see to it that these matters were remedied.

If malnutrition was a communicable condition, we would promptly check it ; if lack of warm clothing reacted upon us in some way, we would see that it was provided. If some deleterious condition arising from dirty, unsanitary camps and humpies affected us directly, we would ensure that better housing was provided. As it is, some country towns object to the presence of a native camp in their vicinity, and one is not blaming them for that ; but all they ask is the removal of this “foul blot” upon their fair landscape. It does not occur

to them to improve the lot of its inmates – merely to be rid of them.

Then, if some more enterprising native elects to come into town, having succeeded in securing a habitation that no one else will occupy because of its condition, the town will not be happy until the ejection of the coloured inmates is effected – though there are exceptions. Coloured folk dislike patronage, but united efforts on their behalf are never resented, though such efforts are few and far between.

Out of sight, out of mind, seems to be the prevailing desire – except where they are useful – but we cannot rid ourselves of a festering sore by hiding and neglecting it. Its neglect only increases its dangers. Present methods will never overtake race deterioration. Progress is too slow to catch up with necessities. The native cannot work out his own destiny unaided.

One generation succeeds another in growing numbers and still goes on in the same old way. Though a few are regenerated in the process, many slip back into a way of living inferior to that of their full-blood ancestors.

Every now and again someone takes up the cudgels on behalf of the natives, and much is then made of what we do and intend to do for them. Inspired statements are made, some new official provision is referred to, in dignified rejoinder and

by way of comparison with past activities, not without justice – because there has been much improvement in the past two or three decades. But do not be satisfied with that ; enquire for yourselves. Compare what we have done for them with what we have done for ourselves in the past quarter of a century, and if you are honest you will conclude that proportionately we have done a hundredfold more for ourselves than we have done for our coloured brethren.

What we have done for these so far has been the minimum compatible with absolute necessity to save our faces in the eyes of the world, and save them from sheer starvation. You cannot ignore the fact of their presence, like the landlady who, answering the Curate seeking rooms at a seaside resort, and who asserted he detected a smell in the place, said : “It couldn’t be the drains, because there warn’t any.”

As to that, the general viewpoint is – well, they are only natives, and anything is good enough for them.

Let us forget for a moment that they are of native origin and regard them as poor whites, and you will at once appreciate how small is the measure of your effort towards them, how hopeless these methods are in solving their difficulties –

indeed, in some respects they are only adding to them.

It is a fact that the coloured people cannot achieve a proper place in society of their own endeavours under the present conditions. They can only carry on and barely do that, but never advance, and therefore the result must be deterioration. No people can merely “exist” for long without deterioration.

The State of Victoria provided a fitting example of this. In that State only about half the remaining natives are subject to legislative control, the balance without guidance or help from Authority appear to be in a state of deterioration surpassing that found anywhere else. This was correctly emphasised by a request to the Government from the Victorian Country Women’s Association that all these people should be brought under the law which already makes some beneficial provision for the other half.

It is a wonder our natives are no more trouble than they are, but in spite of lacking strength, hope and moral support or efficient training, they still refrain from crime and, generally, behave decently. They haven’t a kick in them ; perhaps it is a pity they haven’t – they might then demand redress.

There is surely one thing the war taught us – that is, how to do things quickly. We wave the

magic wand and, hey presto! Great roads, camps, airfields, buildings, and factories appear in unpredictable places overnight, so to speak. We get the money, too. Why can't we do this in peace time?

Missions, some types more than others, are too slow in reaching anything like a state of maturity. So are institutions run by Governments, but they are not so slow as missions. That is, progress is too slow – so slow at times that deterioration sets in. Building up goes hand in hand with breeding up – that is, breeding the inmates.

The conduct of native matters generally is incredibly slow. In 1927, I found myself giving evidence in favour of the Commonwealth then taking over the care of the natives, and years before that – in 1911, to be exact – the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, made a move in the same direction ; yet thirty-three more years had to pass before officially it was proposed that this should be done, though for a limited period only ; but of course all sorts of mild pressure had been exercised to the same end in the years between.

In Western Australia it took me ten years to bring to a state of usefulness a certain Settlement. When my back was turned, it was closed up by a thoughtless Government in ten days, and it took me another ten years to restore it – that is, to get

a decision to re-establish it – owing to political considerations! A generation lost the use of that place in consequence – twenty years out of the lives of the natives in that area lost to their children. It took me twelve years to get a bill before Parliament aiming at the amendment of the existing Native Law.

I have watched a whole generation of children grow up, with little or no real advancement for the majority of them.

We never had an official conference to consider native matters, and there has been but one Missionary Convention invoked for a similar purpose.

Missionary bodies still fail to present a united front for co-operative purposes. Yet in the past, had there been concerted action in calling attention to their claims, such an attitude would have gained results conditional upon the fulfilment of certain principles in respect to the physical condition and treatment of the natives coming respectively within their jurisdiction, and we should without rancour have arrived at a more satisfactory position than is apparent in some parts to-day.

Even organisations controlling more than one mission station quarrelled and split, and their lack of unity, is still such that one section is able to

command more support than another. The prizes still go to the most persistent pleaders, those able to put up the best sob story, the best showmen, regardless of the good work being done by more silent workers.

Although for one hundred and thirty years we have, as separate States, been trifling with one of our most difficult problems, the people as a whole have cared little, and a large section of the community said, in effect, "Let the natives alone ; we can use them ; we can handle them and their problems."

We can see the results of that aimless policy to-day.

For twenty-five years I watched over the destinies of the native race in Western Australia. The road was hard, the going rough, the heart-breaks many ; yet there were limited successes, and these helped to weigh the scales still showing a heavy adverse balance. But I believe the foundations of a new structure were laid for others to build upon.

Not many have the courage openly to support those fighting for justice for the blacks, though many personally express their appreciation of efforts made by those who do. Few say what they think, much less act upon their convictions. The fear of consequences still sways those who are not strong enough to meet the criticism of their fellows – white of course.

Excepting some of our early pioneers, our women have displayed a lamentable lack of interest in their coloured kin, and children especially. Women as Protectors have done little good. Their absence from the Royal Commissions on native matters has been notable. Until quite recently no woman had a place upon a Board for the Welfare of the Natives, but now South Australia has set a good example by appointing two. Much has no doubt been deliberately kept from women writers and investigators. Some women's organisations have taken up the native question in a general fashion, and their doings have been tintured by exaggerated and inexact statements and faulty advices, rendering them unreliable. Others again are well-meaning, but futile. Their deliberations drag on from year to year until futility becomes complete uselessness, and no one really does anything.

It is true that in recent years some have supported the movement for the National control of the native people, but have not suggested any measures which might be taken to that end, or indicated whether they are satisfied with the present pattern of control by the Commonwealth in its territories, or of any State.

The women of Australia could do a lot for their less fortunate coloured sisters if the really wanted

to, but they have so much they want to do, have they not?

One would have thought that where contact between their own men and native women became the rule rather than the exception, as in some parts of Australia, our women would have made their presence felt. On the contrary, very few white women have ventured to speak out, and missionary ladies have scarcely dared to mention the subject.

Mrs. Roosevelt said in Canberra : "We have seen the trend towards legislation dealing with the rights of human beings, and I feel that this is so because women have had a hand in things." Mrs. Roosevelt may be right, but it is unfortunate that women, other than workers in the field, have played such a feeble part in the social emancipation of our native people, some half of whom are females and nearly a third children.

If I have been critical of some phases of the native question herein referred to, there are some people who will say I have not been critical enough, and these are they who know what I also know. The subject is one needing a frank approach.

Moreover, in what I have written I have had no desire to hurt the feelings of anyone, least of all those whose cause I espouse. But, as someone has said, "There are certain states of society and conditions of affairs in which a man is bound to

speak out and be antagonistic, when conformity is not only a weakness but a sin."

Official statements are true in fact, but the truth behind many of them would often present a sorry tale and one which it were best should be told. I know, because I have compiled so many official statements of such a nature.

Answers to questions in Parliament are notorious for their brevity. They throw little real light upon the subject and must surely disappoint the questioners – they are so profoundly non-committal. I know it is unwise to wash our dirty linen in public, but we should wash it nevertheless, and that, I am afraid, is what we do not always do.

My remarks may not be appropriate to all Australia, but they will apply to most of it, I imagine. They particularly apply to the southern half, and what I write of the coloured must not be regarded as a present-moment policy for the full-bloods, particularly the still unspoilt bush people. I may not be right, but I have tried to show things as they appear to me.

The fact remains that these people are increasing, and will continue to do so. That being so, my object is to try to point out the direction in which we may assist in bringing about the condition of things visualised in resolution Number One of the Canberra Conference ; and to suggest a way of life to be encouraged by us and followed by

the native people, for whom all we can do even to the fullest extent of my suggestions, will be partial recompense for their sufferings during the past many decades.

But there must be a period of transition, a hiatus so to speak, between the present incongruity and a future of complete assimilation, a period of intense training in every sense of the word.

Our own race has taken thousands of years to reach the point where it is to-day, and we cannot expect this hiatus to be bridged in a generation. One anthropologist, Dr. D.S. Davidson, of Philadelphia University, has said that for this purpose of change at least two centuries must be allowed. Well, more than three-quarters of that period has already elapsed.

I know there are people who still will not agree with me. It may be that even some of the coloured people themselves will not concur in all I have said, but nevertheless my conclusions result from half a working lifetime's labour and experience amongst the natives and those whose duty it is to care for them, and therefore, unless I am grievously mistaken, should at least provide some food for thought.

ASSIMILATION

MISCEGENATION which produced the grandparents and parents of the existing coloured people of Australia has been going on for over a hundred year, and this compels us to-day to seek a means of adjusting to some of its distressing results.

Our men appropriated full-blood women from the earliest days of settlement, and now their female descendants are acquiring our men, not by *force majeure*, but through the natural process of mating and marriage based largely upon mutual affection.

While white men have cohabited freely with native women, white women all along exercised greater discrimination. Indeed, intercourse between aboriginal men and white women has been very rare, and I have not known of more than half a dozen cases in twenty-five years. White women have not been placed in juxtaposition to black men as in the opposite case, but even had they been, it is certain a similar position would not have arisen. Moreover, there have been comparatively few cases of rape or assault committed by the black man.

There has always been something in the black man's regard for a white women that the white man has not possessed for the full-blood woman.

It is not merely the fear of consequences that has produced this immunity, because many white women have been left in isolation amongst natives for weeks at a time, and yet commanded the obedience and respect of their black helpers. There is more in it than that, perhaps some spiritual concept, or recognition by the blacks that a white woman is more likely to prove their friend than their enemy, and is therefore revered.

“What shall I do with this?” said the young Australian girl to me one day when she was ushered into my office with a bundle in her arms. I looked and saw a coloured child. The girl explained that its father was an aboriginal who had become friendly with her and – she was a lonely girl. Perhaps her youth and loneliness provided her excuse, but I have known older women, without these excuses to plead, to have children by aboriginal men.

Strangely enough, while it was always an offence in a legal sense for a white man to cohabit with an aboriginal woman, the contrary had, until recently, not been provided for, presumably because it was never contemplated that such a thing could happen. Coloured men of aboriginal origin have always been reluctant to make advances to white women, yet our own men have constantly sought out coloured girls, both for intercourse and occasionally marriage. Perhaps a reason for this is

that coloured girls have always been in close association with whites than have the men of their own kind. They have been taken into institutions at an early age and passed out into the community later, while the boys have been left to a rougher upbringing in the bush. This, of course, has happened in the case of full-bloods too. Missions especially have been prone to encourage the admission of full-blood girls while failing to induce the boys to follow, leading to complex tribal difficulties.

As regards coloured youngsters, in recent years it has been sought to correct this position by also taking in the boys and giving them the same attention as the girls. It came to be realised that the practice of taking the girls, and not the boys, would in time bring about an unbalanced position, besides robbing the boys of their natural mates and leading to undesirable practices. The girls, too, were receiving a rough education and training denied the boys, and the latter were in danger of acquiring an undesirable inferiority complex. The different approach of the coloured youth to any female therefore is largely due years of this mistaken policy. The full-blood, on the contrary, when deprived of his tribal mate in this way, or a some white master, or even through some tribal cause, has been able to seek consolation to some extent amongst his aged female friends, an

amenity not available to his coloured half-brother!

Intercourse between white men and full-blood women has accounted for countless tragedies, murders, internecine fighting, and has tended to encourage race suicide through induced abortion and infanticide. Many an aboriginal woman has tried to disguise her coloured baby by all over application of charcoal or boot polish, either to deceive her tribal man or hoodwink the white father, or even in the hope that Authority will mistake her bastard child for a full-blood. They do not want their children to be half-white any more than we would wish them to be coloured. Naturally, the causes mentioned have brought about a decreasing rate of child-birth amongst the full-bloods and reduced the paucity of full-blood females to an almost dangerous level, but so long as there are aboriginal women capable of bearing children left free to roam the country half-blood children will be born to them. Statistics show that children constitute about one-quarter of the full-blood population, while of the coloured people nearly half are children.

It is remarkable how sometimes the legal interpretation of a word or phrase will alter established practice. In the West, under an Act of 1908, we regarded sexual intercourse between a white man and a full-blood woman as a serious breach of the

law until a day when the highest legal authority available to us pointed out that we were mistaken. I had decided to proceed against the manager of a pastoral station who, because of his unabashed intercourse with the native women on his place, was disrupting native life, not to mention other undesirable aspects of the matter. I resorted to my legal friend aforesaid for advice in proceeding. "But you can't do that, my dear fellow,": he said, "because the man is not co-habiting with these women." He produced a dictionary in proof of his words and read out the meaning of "cohabit" – "to live together as man and wife." The Act said that cohabitation was an offence, but did not mention sexual intercourse.

Of course, that ruling, coming from so high a legal authority, completely floored us, and from then onwards, until a few years ago when the law was suitably amended, we were unable to take legal action in the case of such offences. It was seldom indeed that the two "lived together as man and wife", and when they did I generally found a disposition to crown the union by a legal marriage rather than confess the relationship in open Court.

In the many years which intervened between the giving of this legal ruling and the amendment of the faulty clause, it almost seemed as though advantage were being taken of the acknowledged weakness in the law, because the number of first-

cross children who became subjects for institutional attention increased to quite an appreciable extent.

Of course, our inability to intervene in many undesirable cases was construed as a weakness on our part, not only by those who were sailing close to the legal wind, but also by many well-intentioned people unaware of the real position ; but as often as not we were able to bring about a measure of reform in some other way. I have heard natives unmercifully castigated in Court for attempted rape or something of that sort, in complete disregard of the many cases in which native women have been subjected to similar or worse indignities. Occasionally we got a real break. I recall one famous case especially, because of a refreshingly realistic attitude of the Judge who tried a native husband of the wronged woman, for killing the white man caught by him *flagrante delicto*. The woman had been hobbled to prevent her escape – not the first to be so treated – and her man sent off on an errand. He had become suspicious, returned, and exacted his vengeance.

The accused native had been awaiting trial, in jail, for several weeks, and although found guilty, the Judge in passing sentence, said in effect that he had been imprisoned long enough for his crime, that any white man in similar circumstances might have done likewise, and that it was a case of the

unwritten law. The prisoner was discharged upon the rising of the court. His astonishment at his release, nearly equalled that of Counsel and Jury present.

The attitude of the natives in such instances is often illuminating. A half-caste living with full-bloods on a sheep station killed a white hand. "I had to shoot him," he said. "He was interfering with women on the station ; he was only a bloody 'pommy' " (immigrant).

It has often been said that you cannot make people moral by Act of Parliament or, as Hitler once put it, you cannot abolish sexual intercourse by decree nor eliminate the instinct to possess. True enough, but laws and punishment are good in their way, to serve to check illicit intercourse and regulate responsibility for the care and maintenance of children. We have attempted to regulate illicit intercourse because of its often very evil consequences, but it is doubtful if such measures could be defended to-day upon purely ethnic grounds.

Had our forbears insisted upon a clean-cut embargo upon illicit sexual intercourse between black and white, beginning a hundred years or so ago, the process of assimilation would have been further advanced to-day because such action might have resulted in many more legal unions bringing about naturally the same result. The trend of

opinion, however, seems to have been against such an embargo, and it is only recently, and too late to be of much use except as a means of regulating unsuitable alliances, that the laws of Australia have been satisfactorily amended in that direction. As it has been, there has been little or no bar to miscegenation but no encouragement of racial admixture through legal marriage. The scientific study of the origins of our aboriginals began at a later period – too late to be of much use as a guide to our immigrant fathers, who, like Dampier, probably regarded them as “the miserablest people on earth.”

Sometimes when we did win some glaring case, the punishment meted out to the offending white man was so lenient as to be ludicrous, and clearly showed that the administration of the law was sympathetic towards him. I have known men who upon conviction could have been imprisoned for up to two years or be fined a hundred pounds, to be fined less than one pound. Because this leniency usually came from local Justices, our law was later amended to provide that such cases must be taken before a Government Magistrate. Yet because white will not willingly condemn white in his relations with black, such leniency was constantly exhibited in various ways, and always worked against our efforts to straighten matters out.

The laws of bastardy usually provide that a man shall be financially responsible for his illegitimate offspring. That sounds all right in theory, but we seldom found it possible to apply it in practice. The white man got away with it almost every time by simply denying parentage, more especially if he had not been convicted of “cohabiting” with the mother of his child.

If Authority with all its legal aids could not convict, how could a full-blood or even a coloured woman obtain redress in the absence of such help? She did not even try, and more often than not shielded her seducer. Still, if white men had been made responsible for their coloured offspring from the earliest days, we should have a different story to tell and have saved much costly effort, because such children, like our own, would have received support, education, and training at the expense of their fathers. It has been said to their credit that some few white men have taken pride in their coloured illegitimate children, have paid for years of upkeep and schooling, and even remembered them in their wills. Yet I know native women to refuse proffered assistance of a like nature, mainly I think because they did not wish that any claim the fathers might make to the children should be recognised.

Employers of native labour argued in effect that all coloured children should be left in the

bush, or on the pastoral stations to become their future workers. That might have been all right if it had stopped there, but of course it did not. A position something obtaining in the slave days in the Southern States of America was desired, where a slave producing a big family of potential workers was highly valued. But in the nature of things it did not work out like that, because the half-blood women began producing children fathered, not by their own kind, but by white men. If these coloured youngsters had been efficiently educated and trained on their employers' properties, even then the matters might have been adjusted to suit all parties ; but no, they just became cheap labour and cost their employers little more than their keep – they, in fact, with few exceptions, remained white natives, living in the manner of their full-blood aboriginal forbears, but shorn of all tribal wise inhibitions and limitations. They became socially outcast from both black and white, and many females mere prostitutes.

Quadroon children turn up in all sorts of unlikely places. They are often to be found with their mothers in native camps, remote mining centres, and at outcamps of large pastoral properties where there is a marked disposition to conceal their presence. At these outcamps, the mothers are employed cooking for the musterers

or mill-hands. I knew one half-caste woman so employed who had six children by five different white men – only one had suggested marriage, and he disappeared! Some fathers of quadroon children living with half-caste mothers, also had white wives and children of their own but not living where their husbands worked. Men would live with coloured women for years, becoming responsible for several quadroon children, then suddenly cast them aside to enter the bonds of matrimony with some possibly unsuspecting white women. The State then becomes the only guardian these poor children know, because few white fathers of the type mentioned can be made to accept their responsibilities.

Deplorable and pitiable domestic tragedies – alas! inseparable from a life of this kind – often follow in its wake. On the other hand, there are men who have lived for years with coloured women, regarding them in the same light as though they had been in a legal union, treating them and their children with consideration, but doing nothing to ensure their children's future except as natives.

A few of these men upon being approached agreed to set matters in order by legal marriage and schooling for the offspring, but such cases required careful handling and were difficult of approach – though it was all part of one's job!

It was the increasing numbers of near-white children which finally turned the scales in giving the deciding answer to the question as to whether the coloureds should be encouraged to go back to black, or be advanced to white status to be eventually assimilated into our race.

While the final concerted decision in this regard was made at the Canberra Conference previously referred to, in the years immediately preceding this there had been some controversy regarding this, and in the Northern Territory the policy of lifting the half-caste to the standard of the white had already been enunciated. As to this, however, there was some difference of opinion amongst the senior Officials concerned with Native Affairs, and for myself I must confess that it was only after many years of first-hand experience that I was able to come to a decision in the matter, and to express at Canberra the view that ultimately the natives must be absorbed into the white population of Australia.

I remember one of my senior field officers, when discussing the future of a coloured girls, declaimed in florid language that "We of the blood of a Gladstone, a Shakespeare, or a Kitchener should not plant out seed in the womb of a native," and that "for the half-blood child the slogan should be, back to the aborigine ever – marry a white man never!" He overlooked the fact that we had been

doing that very thing for a hundred years or more and that the blood of such illustrious progenitors, if indeed we possessed it, was already in the numerous progeny of such unions. There is no marked difference between the blood of the native and of ours, all human blood being fundamentally alike. Differences between the "bluest" blood and the lowest in the land are due to tradition, environment and habit, not to blood variations. Even if there were some divergence, like the half-empty glass the coloured people are already half empty, and in more in many cases, of aboriginal blood.

Another of my senior field officers, himself in charge of a native out-station, referring to attempts being made to induce a full-blood man to mate with a half-blood girl – which of course he was opposing – wrote : "You know the fate which is in store for the half-caste girl with a black man ; he keeps her as a chattel and leads a life of ease on her prostitution . . . you know it is a fact that she becomes a sort of slave to the blacks and is beaten and ill-treated in a most brutal manner – she is not wanted by either party. And it is the white people's duty to see that such things do not happen to half-caste girls." I knew he was right, and there had been coloured girls who appealed to me to be taken from these conditions.

The full-blood man seeking a coloured mate -

the reverse is less often the case – does so because of certain benefits to be gained, more than because he prefers a light-coloured wife. Such a one is probably not entitled to any full-blood girl because of tribal reasons, and may become a menace to the coloured girl, forcing her into an unwanted alliance. We had at times to deal very severely with some young full-bloods who by stealth, deception and intimidation stole coloured girls from institutions against their wishes.

It would seem proper that like should mate with like – full-blood with full-blood, half-blood with half-blood or lighter – but because so many are near-white we must expect, and have experienced already, legal unions between us and them. It is to the benefit of our race that the full-blood should not any longer be encouraged to mate with other than full-blood ; on the contrary, he should be rigidly excluded from any association likely to lead to any other union. It would be contrary to our view of assimilation to do anything which might force our coloured black people back to the black, and moreover their continued mating with full-bloods is liable to prolong the process of absorption until after there are no more virile full-bloods remaining alive.

Racial mixture by marriage is surely preferable to miscegenation without it – not that when referring to absorption we mean marriage – that happens whatever we may think about it.

It is not always wise for people of widely diverse races to intermarry, especially races having different cultures and temperaments. That, however, cannot be said of people already allied to us by association, consanguinity and ancestry. The young half-blood maiden is a pleasant, placid, complacent person as a rule, while the quadroon girl is often strikingly attractive, with oftentimes auburn hair, rosy freckled colouring, and good figure, or maybe blue eyes and fair hair. (See illustrations.) In both cases the lads who have been properly cared for are well set up and often good looking. As I see it, what we have to do is to elevate these people to our plane, and if intermarriage between them and ourselves becomes more popular, then we shall be none the worse for it. That will solve our problem itself.

At the Canberra Conference several delegates with wide experience affirmed this view.

Professor Cleland, of Adelaide University, said : “It seems to me that there can be only one satisfactory solution of the half-caste problem, and that is the ultimate absorption of these persons in the white community. I think that this will not necessarily lead in any way to a deterioration of type, inasmuch as racial intermixtures seem, in most cases to lead to increased virility.”

Sir Raphael Cilento, Director of Health in

Queensland, not long ago recommended an elimination of coloured groups near towns by the absorption of the better elements into the general community.

The fact that the full-blood people are apparently dying out, while the coloured people are increasing and all the time slowly approaching us in culture and colour, lessens our problem of assimilation. Though the full-bloods constitute about sixty-five per cent. and the coloureds thirty-five per cent. of the total native population, the former have decreased by some ten thousand in the past decade, while the latter have grown by nearly a like figure. The rate of decrease and increase respectively is likely to be accelerated as time goes on. Twenty years ago the coloureds only constituted 17.69 per cent. of the total native population, as against thirty-five per cent. now. The coloured people are increasing most rapidly in Queensland, next in South Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales in like order.

No less a famous scientist than Sir Arthur Keith has stated that if he were given the task of building a new race he would graft it upon the Aboriginal of Australia – surely a comforting thought when considering the question.

Time and again I have been asked by some white man :
“If I marry so-and-so (a coloured person)

will our children be black?” As the law imposed upon me the responsibility of approving or objecting to the proposed marriage, I felt I had to give an answer to that vital question. The answer, of course, depended upon whether the woman was of pure European-Aboriginal descent. If that was so, I felt that I could safely reply that while no one could be definite in such a case, I thought the chances were all against it happening. That the children would be lighter than the mother, and if later they married whites and had children these would be lighter still, and that in the third or fourth generation no sign of native origin what-ever would be apparent. Subject to this process a half-blood mother is unmistakable as to origin, her quarter-caste or quadroon offspring almost like a white, and an octoroon entirely indistinguishable from on (See illustrations.) A quadroon child may become a little darker by the time adolescence is reached, but even then would pass as a southern European.

While it is with the people of European-Aboriginal descent that I am most concerned here as regards marriage, the indications are that if a white man marries a coloured woman of Aboriginal descent also possessing some Negro, Asiatic, Indian or other coloured ancestry, then he must take a greater risk of atavism in any children of the union there may be. In the case of the coloured

people where there has been a quite recent admixture of Negro blood for instance, the descendants through generations markedly exhibit the colour, hair, and features of their negroid forbears ; indeed, whether European, Negro, Asiatic, or Indian introductions, the characteristics of the migrant seems to predominate. Those persons of Negro-Aboriginal descent sometimes strongly exhibit certain deleterious cultural traits, while in those of Chinese-Aboriginal origin the good qualities of the Chinese may be present.

With our pioneer settler came a few Negro or Indian servants picked up on route via the West Africa, the Cape, and Mauritius. These having mixed freely with the Aborigines have transmitted characteristics plainly to be seen to-day. The same can be said of other coloureds, mostly Asiatic, who managed to enter Australia in pre-Federation days.

As to ourselves, though it is often said that only the lowest in the social scale would consort with an aboriginal, that has been far from the case. Some of the youngsters collected into institutions in the past years have been fathered by quite respectable Australians, whose good qualities and traits have been transmitted to their offspring. But by far the greatest number of coloured people are the result of the union of persons of their own kind, and the number of first-cross half-bloods must

diminish to vanishing point as time goes on. Throughout Southern Australia the coloured people are predominantly European-Aboriginal.

It seems apparent with these people of European-Aboriginal origin that like breeds like – two half-bloods will produce children of similar blood and not quarter-blood as many people think – and that therefore it requires the admixture of further white blood to alter the ration and produce the quadroon. (See illustrations.) In the same way the union of a half-blood and a full-blood will produce a three-quarter black, or, looking at it from the native angle, an aboriginal-quadroon. The offspring of two quadroons of quarter-castes remains the same as the parents (See illustrations.)

Between the full-blood and the near-white there are now so many grades of colour that it is impossible here to make more than passing reference to what really constitutes a scientific study. It is a fact, however, that people of all these varying grades exist, from near-black to near-white, and though city dwellers do not come much in contact with them, as they do not usually reside near larger centres of population, they are all well known in institutions and to our country residents who also employ them.

The various cross-sections often puzzle officials, who at times find headache-making problems in deducting who is or is not a native or aboriginal

in law. Even so, they are sometimes defeated by natives themselves, whose claims in Court that they are not legally natives excite the sympathy of the Bench, or who have some not too particular legal luminary to defend them. The life of the officials concerned with native affairs is not a happy one at times – usually very much the reverse.

Now whether all these varying castes will eventually achieve a sort of homogeneity and become a separate ethnic group, largely depends upon our attitude towards them, but it is emphatically not an end to be encouraged or desired. Already the settlement system tends to produce ethnic communities, some verging towards the full-blood, others towards the white, according to the strength or preponderance of full-blood crossing.

Should there pass another fifty years of social ostracism for these people, our descendants will see a new race evolve and one they may well blame us for bequeathing them.

We do not know the origin of the aboriginal people, but do know that there are certain things they are not. They are not, for instance, negroid, though perhaps the strain was in some of them once, but has long vanished down the ages. Neither are they Mongolian. The scientific conclusion is that they migrated to the Australian

continent and are not akin to us in any useful classification sense, but it has been said, too, that they predate us in some vague Caucasian direction. Doubtless we and they, like all other humans, emanated from some common origin away back in the dawn of time. Whatever may be the truth as to this, the mingling of their blood and ours presents no marked antagonistic features. On the contrary, the more they mix with us the more like us they become, the less the likelihood of reversion to the aboriginal type. Reversion there is in plenty, but it is to a recent white ancestry. While there is some scientific authority for the assertion that there is no atavism to the black where white and coloured are united, there seems also to be no specific evidence to show that it does occur.

In a lengthy experience of hundreds of families I do not remember observing any reversion to the black, but I have seen lots of children I could have sworn were fathered by white men, in the face of persistent claims of the mothers that they were merely throwbacks to white grandfathers.

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If, then, assimilation is the desired end, the question of marriage is of paramount importance. In the past much carelessness has been exhibited by missionaries and clergy in linking up people

of ethnic unsuitability and against tribal laws. That is putting it mildly in some cases. There has been the deliberate ignoring of tribal custom and culture, leading to disturbances, culminating in quarrelling, murder, and consequent punishment. There has been the marriage of indentured Asiatics to native women, resulting in their desertion, destitution and prostitution. Afghan and aboriginal unions have led to similar ends. The Chinese who marries an aboriginal wife generally finds himself deserted by her later years. I knew of one case in which, after the woman had produced three daughters in about a dozen years, her tribe succeeded in inveigling her away and restoring her to a tribal man. The poor Chinese told me that the tribe used to sit all around his garden, a green oasis set cup-like amongst low hills, watching and threatening him until he was unable to work and in fear of his life. They did this repeatedly, like crows awaiting a feast. He was glad when his wife went, and later he sorrowfully parted with his daughters to enter an institution. They turned out well, too, intelligent and capable. See illustration of one of these first-cross Chinese-Aboriginal girls. But the offspring of these ethnically unsuitable unions too often is found in institutions. What else is there for them?

Again, natives sometimes pass themselves off as Maoris, and I know of at least one white girl who was married to a coloured man of Aboriginal-Negro descent

under that impression. The marriage failed, but surely the persons who celebrate such unions must bear some responsibility for not enquiring more closely into matters before-hand, enabling them to explain the facts truthfully to both parties.

Also there is the practice of making "honest women" of girls who have become enceinte, no matter what their wishes may be or how unsuitable the alliance. This practice is associated with some institutions.

After this sort of thing had been going on for many years with no power to regulate it, and having in mind the desirability of preserving the purity of the race in view of assimilation, we at last succeeded in making it illegal for authorised persons to celebrate marriages to which Authority objected, and granting the right of appeal to a Magistrate should the parties be aggrieved with the decision given. Even so it was difficult induce some persons to fall into line, and a few so-called marriages neither legally correct nor entirely in accordance with Christian practice, continued to be performed. Of course, there was no interference on our part with native practice in marrying according to tribal law.

The full-blood natives themselves have been more particular in the matter of incorrect mating, as the following instances will show, this, of course, being in keeping with their tribal laws, alas! now so often departed from in this respect. Some half-caste lads had been sent to a northern mission. Attempts were made to obtain wives for them from amongst the surrounding full-bloods. This failed, and a proposal was then made to me by the Church concerned that I should send an equal number of half-caste girls from a mission further south to be united with these lads. Of course, I objected to mass marriage on this principle, which was repugnant from a Christian or any other point of view, and the plan was rejected. Later, however, the mission authorities succeeded in obtaining permission to send some of their lads to the southern mission, there to seek without duress mates from amongst girls of their own kind.

A half-caste, who had been convicted of assaulting a white girl in the south, after a period of imprisonment was released in order that he might be sent to one of our northern cattle stations, to be placed in charge of the manager, a course permitted by law. The man was detailed to work in the garden, where a number of aboriginal women were accustomed to work. After he had spent some ten years quite happily at this station, I asked this half-caste, on the occasion of one of

my visits, whether there was anything I could do for him. He replied that his only trouble was that he could not secure a wife, as the full-bloods would not permit it.

We had to provide, too, a penalty for those who, to cover up their own misdemeanours, falsely "induced" natives to believe they were married. A white man would get a native girl into trouble and, as a cover for his actions, "marry" her to a full-blood and send the couple bush, where her coloured child would be born. There continue to be, of course, some happy marriages between native girls and white men, and vice versa.

The majority of unions between coloured people themselves have not been legalised, and the offspring are therefore "born out of wedlock." Moreover, they have become "Mootch," as the South-Western natives say, denoting their failure to follow the tribal rules of their aboriginal fore-fathers and consequent inbreeding to a deleterious extent. We had to provide for legal recognition of such unions amongst the older people when it came to questions of property and deceased estates.

The existing condition of affairs is gradually being rectified, and can continue to be improved through the children by moral teaching, education and example. They must be taught that the old ways were not in accordance with white custom

and Christian principles, though it is to the credit of the older people that they recognised their unions as binding just as surely as though they had been married according to our laws. The same cannot be said for the younger generation, many of whom have become more or less irresponsible in their attitude, and to whom the "sacred bonds" mean little.

Thirty or forty years ago there existed a better type of half-caste. These were robust, meat-eating people – the women big like the men and as vigorous. The family heads were mostly first-cross people. They travelled the country with their camel carts, horses, buggies and what not, in family groups, and they were good, hard workers. They were a people apart, and intermarriage was inevitable. The offspring were not equal to their parents ; they ran to seed through intermarriage and became lethargic. But with the admixture of further white blood they recovered some of the original traits, acquiring part of the good qualities of both races ; physical improvement being notable.

It is because the success of our plan of assimilation is so allied with the question of who shall marry whom, and because colour plays so great a part in the scheme of things, that we must encourage approach towards the white rather than the black, through marriage.

Apart from the marriage question, then, just what do we mean by absorption, assimilation and such like terms? Do we mean social equality? That famous negro educationalist Booker T. Washington, in one of his speeches, declared : "In all things purely social we can be as separate as the five fingers, and yet as the hand in all things essential to material progress." But James Weldon Johnson, perhaps an equally famous negro, pointed out that "the figure of speech would not stand logical analysis because it raised an inimical question of what do 'all things essential to material progress' consist?" He averred that the elimination of all things deemed purely social would have a very narrow margin on which to cooperate like "one as the hand." Johnson was surely right.

Social equality implies admitting the coloured man to all those things enjoyed by ourselves, and there is nothing to prevent people of two races associating with each other in every way if they care to do so. As it is, I doubt if there could be found any Australian at present prepared to admit as his social equal a person of aboriginal ancestry and, at the same time, grant to him every right and facility which under law he himself enjoys.

At this stage, I mean in their present state of life, the coloured people would surely not desire

complete social equality with us if it meant immediate plunging them into a life for which they are not yet ready, and even though some have already merged into the community it is doubtful whether they have attained social equality of a type which implies the acquisition of "all things essential to material progress."

Surely equality must include a spiritual essence, a mental level, an acceptance of people on the terms of friendship, even intimate friendship, the association between people of congenial tastes, attainments of kindred interests. All that is yet to come, but whether it will come depends at first upon our efforts towards bringing it about, later assisted by the people's own elevation to a condition enabling them to seek out these things for themselves, perhaps to claim, by preaching, teaching and representation, that they have as much right to all that social equality implies as we have ourselves.

One wonders if the day will ever come when, like the negroes in New York in 1915, our coloured people will march silently down the streets of one of our big cities carrying banners and distributing circulars bearing appeals for justice in their cause from which this is an extract : "We march because we are thoroughly opposed to Jim-Crow cars (separate railway and tramway), segregation, discrimination, disfranchisement . . . and the host of

other evils that are forced on us. It is time that the spirit of Christ should be manifest in the making of laws. We march because we want our children to live in a better land and enjoy fairer conditions than have fallen to our lot." Maybe there will be no need for that.

Wishful thinking induces people to believe that some coloured people have made greater social advances than is actually the case. They seem to think that by taking a coloured man, just able to read and write, out of his environment, dressing him in a nice new suit and granting him full civil rights so to speak – saying in effect, "Now you run along and look after yourself, because you are civilised now!" all will be well with him. Alas! no. There is still the colour prejudice and inherent traits which few adults now living will ever surmount. That reminds me of a lad at one of our settlements who was about to have a tooth extracted, and who kicked up a most unholy shindy before the dentist had even touched him. He was asked why he was making such an infernal row, and his answer was, "Well, I'm civilised now!"

Claims have also been made that certain families educated and trained at institutions in the West had thereby been enabled to merge into the community. If by merging into the community is meant the attainment of social equality,

Then, knowing all such family groups in the Western State, I regret I cannot support such claims. The social standing attained by these family groups, of which there are several, is anything but satisfactory, and in some cases neither is their conduct, as I have every reason to know.

Claims such as these will not bear investigation, and are worthless, indeed harmful, for when discovered false they throw cold water on attempts being made to attain higher things. Few indeed of the coloured people, except some quarter-castes and quadroons not connected with family groups, have really attained average social equality with ourselves.

Colour prejudice is the main stumbling-block towards assimilation – colour combined with ignorance, ill-health, deleterious living conditions, and such-like disabilities, ought at least to have a sporting chance of finding its proper place in the community.

N.B. Tindale, in his * “Survey of the Half-Caste Problem in South Australia,” affirms that the lethargic condition of the coloured man and his tendency to avoid responsibility are probably due to vitamin insufficiency. He suggests that mixed subjects who have been able to mix with

* Reprinted from the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, South Australian Branch, Session 1940-41

the community on equal terms (but how few there are!) as regards food, wages and education scarcely ever revert to old type of life on half-caste stations.

Probably in view of child endowment and other helpful considerations the matter of lack of vitamins will be corrected in due course, but so far as the rest of the argument is concerned I have found that even where all material conditions are satisfactory the coloured man is seldom able to attain our social status, partly through prejudice but mainly owing to the fact that he *is* a coloured man. This is one of the greatest difficulties to be overcome, but in time, providing we can prove that the people are worthy of it, it will be overcome if the right corrective methods are adopted. As I have pointed out, it will take time to carry through these proposals, and throughout that period we must see that the prejudice on account of colour alone is relegated to the background. We must ensure to those who earn the right to do so, the means of living like the rest of the community.

Institutions, and particularly Government settlements, are constantly required to take back coloured people who bravely set out a few months before to begin a new life amidst the white community, because they could not face life as they found it : It was not that the life they expected to

find ; they were still “natives,” and the whites could not forget it and failed to meet them even halfway.

The attitude of some amongst us and some who ought to know better seems to be that these people are doomed to die anyway, therefore it is better to let them die!

So far environment, which plays so great a part in moulding a people, has been utterly bad, but it is an environment which they cannot alter unaided by us, and it is their way of life more than their heredity which prevents progress. The fact that these people are coloured, and descended from so-called blacks, alone suffices to make assimilation in Australia difficult enough ; but colour emphasised by faulty environment as in this case makes it practically impossible. It is for us to alter that environment.

But even if complete social acceptance is denied the coloured man who has been enabled to reach parity with us in all things else, there is nevertheless no reason why he and his kind should not be assisted to live beside us on a social plane similar to ours in every way.

Where intermarriage with Europeans seems undesirable because of certain other racial antecedents, as in certain parts of Queensland, such people can nevertheless be accorded similar amenities to those proposed for others.

INSTITUTIONS

IN the early days of my administration I began to appreciate the necessity for places of refuge for the training and upbringing of half-caste and other coloured youngsters then scattered throughout the State, and North in particular, and living in undesirable surroundings. It seemed that it made little difference whether a woman was a full-blood, or less than the full-blood – the result was the same – she almost always, at some time before middle age, became enceinte by a white man, or lived with one. There were on some pastoral properties full-blood mothers with half-caste children, their female offspring mostly being subject to a similar fate. Nothing seems to be thought of the matter, and these women were generally happy, apart from the violent quarrels which inevitably cropped up now and again as a result of their intimacy with the whites to the detriment of their natural partners. In this, as in most things, the latter always ran a losing race with the whites. And so it was that we began to breed white natives, because the grandchildren of the full-blood women were often nearly as white and, in most cases, separated from their relations, could be taken as a European.

Many half-caste women could claim a variety of white fathers for their several children. Some, having lived with so many man, could not always

place the fathers of their offspring, and often families showed in interesting divergence in appearance and characteristics!

It was not unusual to find coloured children "playing on the wood heap" with their full-blood half-brothers and sisters – the expression denoting their treatment as full-bloods who were accustomed to consume their food, and even sleep, "on the wood pile," the only home some of them ever knew. Seldom were the lighter coloured children treated other than as natives, though as the years passed and Authority took an increasing interest in them, there was shown some disposition to ensure a better fate for them.

The opening up of the interior and Northern areas to travellers by motor car and aeroplane eventually did something to expose these conditions and incline to their betterment ; but they still exist here and there. Most employers, however, could see nothing wrong with this way of life. It was merely a cheap way of keeping up the supply of workers ; anyway, they were "only niggers" and would never be anything else. The same thing was said of the negroes in America before emancipation, but the public auction of attractive, educated, almost white negress girls, fathered by white masters, helped to cause a change of view, as did exposing the conditions mentioned in Australia.

Convinced that something better was needed for these coloured children if they were to be saved from lives of prostitution, ignorance, and quasi-slavery in some cases, I urged the establishment of farm homes equipped to enable them to become decent, self-supporting members of society. My representations met with some success, and hundreds of youngsters were gathered up in due course and sent to newly established Government settlements. Some of the missions, as they improved their conditions, were also employed. Others argued that they were established for the full-bloods ; they did not want their coloured offspring, and refused to accept them as inmates. That they had little accommodation for them, and fewer facilities, was an undoubted fact. Up to then coloured children at missions had been treated exactly like full-bloods. Time has shown the wisdom of the claim that full-blood and coloured children should not be domiciled together, though no one had assimilation then in mind. Missions in Western Australia were then minus suitable living accommodation, hospitals or even efficient medical facilities, and possessed few teachers ; and it seemed essential that these and kindred provisions should be supplied before such places could be classed as homes for the reception of these coloured youngsters.

Full-blood was valued as an object of their religious ministrations far above the unfortunate half-blood, overlooking the fact that the former then seemed destined to die out, while the latter, as being proved year by year, are increasing in number.

The Churches have had a lot to say about what the State has done, or failed to do ; but an examination of the conditions which existed at some of the missions only a few years ago leaves no doubt about the wisdom of creating a complementary system. The Government settlements, though far short of perfection, have turned out numbers of decent, self-respecting workers, now making their own way in the community. The mission system is largely opposed to this, for once a child enters a mission it is problematic whether he or she will ever leave it. A boy may, but a girl seldom does unless she marries a boy who takes her away. But in this, thanks to recently acquired legal powers, Authority can now take a hand by insisting that a girl or boy shall have a chance in life, and not be trained merely as a vehicle for the perpetuation of the species – legalised, of course, but sometimes even contrary to native practice and culture.

To keep pace with ever-increasing indigence amongst natives throughout Australia, institutions are growing in number and size. Many of them

are little more than breeding grounds. Some possess an outlook and have achieved limited success, but it is doubtful if there are any which entirely meet the case of the coloured people, because they vision no real future for their young inmates.

Writers of all kinds, the Press, officials, and Commissions, from time to time, have deplored existing conditions, and recommendations have been made, the tenor of which has been already known to Authority, and some of the advice tendered has been followed. Why, then, has all this brought about no apparent improvement?

One answer is that the more you pamper the native the more will he rely on you for sustenance, and he must accept your charity because conditions force him to do so. You give him rations because he claims he cannot get work, and when rations are supplied he finds no need to work, even if his family is near starvation. But probably the real answer is because he have hitherto regarded our charges as merely "natives" and incapable of attaining social parity with ourselves. Our Institutions have been permeated with this belief.

Both the Western State since 1936, and N.S.W. since 1939, have tried to adopt in its entirety a policy which visions the native being eventually ranged alongside, if not absorbed by, ourselves as partners in our way of life.

But the policy of the Canberra Conference has not been fully implemented. The Conference was never called again to continue its work as was intended ; so the States have since introduced fresh provisions not all in keeping with the Canberra decisions, and differences in policy are creeping in.

There must be some differences in detail, but there should be none in an accepted Australia-wide policy.

There is a lot to be done if we are to accomplish our purpose and make the native self-reliant, self-respecting and self-supporting. Initially, he must go through a period of transition between his present hopeless condition and the state to which we desire him to attain. He must go to school, so to speak, willy nilly ; and herein lies the difference between present proposals and past efforts.

The native must be helped in spite of himself! Even if a measure of discipline is necessary it must be applied, but it can be applied in such a way as to appear gentle persuasion.

Viscount Wavell has said that civilisation is founded upon discipline, yet the discipline we propose here is only akin to that which we usually impose upon ourselves. Let us try it for a generation or two, and we need not fear the outcome. But when I say try it, I mean that every agency now in force and to be employed for the betterment of

the native people must look upon pursuance of the accepted united policy as paramount. There must be complete and enthusiastic co-operation between those charged with its initiation and conduct without reservation, and no back-sliding, changes or let-down behind Authority's back, must be permitted. Political influence must keep out. There will be difficulties and failures, but the end in view will justify the means employed – to wipe out for ever an existing blot upon Australia's escutcheon, and succeed in the ultimate elevation of a minority of our people to social equality with the majority and, what is equally important, to give them the ability to think for themselves.

The settlement system is indeed inevitable and of increasing value. Settlements in Australia, like Topsy, have just "grewed", as Authority has been forced very reluctantly indeed to make some sort of provision for those natives unable to help themselves or their families, orphans who could not be sent to white institutions – unacceptable because of our prejudices – aged and recalcitrant people, loafers and suchlike. But they have not been sufficiently regarded as training homes for life's future, merely as places of internment for unwanted.

Expediency and paltry financial provision have dictated their evolution until some have become higgledy-piggledy masses of unsightliness, and

clumsiness in working. Ordered planning has not produced corresponding results. That is not to say there has not been ordered planning, I know there has, but the foresight of the few has seldom achieved complete fulfilment. Visit almost any of them if you will, and those in charge will tell you in no uncertain voice of their needs, of the total inadequacy of this or that, the absence of any concerted plan. Buildings have been dumped just anywhere. Some have been erected in situ because the planner hoped to continue his plan, but expediency or his departure from the scene prevented it from being further pursued. Somebody else has not followed his plan, maybe has lacked vision. Some institutions are stagnant with age or indifference, and staffs seem to be similarly affected. Many existing verminous, out-dated, unhealthy structures should be swept away and replaced by modern buildings such as we have built and hope to build for our own people who may be compelled by circumstances to dwell therein.

I know how difficult it all is because I have experienced the many heartbreaks of an enthusiastic protagonist. Those charged with the care of natives continually have to suffer setbacks. The perpetual frustration inherent in past administrations has been intolerable for those anxious to make progress

Once a Cabinet Minister accompanied me to a settlement. He was intent upon a reduction in expenditure. Before our staff he shot the question at me : "How much per head does this place cost?" Fortunately I was able to answer him and tell him what the figure was – about half as much as that of the lowest of any other State institution. My Cabinet Minister was effectively silenced and hastily got on to other things.

I am not a visionary, but if only half the expenditure we devote to our white institutions were proportionately spent on native establishments there could be little cause for complaint on financial grounds.

Things go wrong at all institutions at times – some are funny, some tragic and devastating in their results. But this is not the place in which to write up the history of these places, interesting though the story should be. Matters have now reached a point where existing systems must be radically altered and fundamental mistakes rectified. Indeed, there are hopeful signs that changes are taking place. N.S.W., in particular, has already effected much improvement. Institutions like native camps can become hot-beds of scandal, involving both black and white. Staffs are apt to become self-centred and, like their charges, involved in petty friction. Rules and regulations and strict routine must be observed by staffs and even visitors,

no less than inmates. Where, for instance, prohibition has been a rule at institutions, some managers, including missionaries, have not seen fit to apply it to themselves, to the knowledge of the inmates. Some time ago a Cabinet Minister and I were visiting a northern State institution. One evening it was reported to me by the manager that a certain undesirable white man had entered the reserve and proposed camping there, and the question was whether he should be told to leave at once or be permitted to remain until the following morning. Two days later I discovered that my Cabinet Minister and the unwanted white man had spent most of the night drinking at the latter's expense! What could one do in such circumstances?

Very often in the past, things good for inmates have been obliterated because staffs regarded them as too much trouble. I have in mind an institution where a complete orchard was chopped down because the boys stole the fruit ; another where a recreation room was done away with because it was not used, the management not recognising the fact that a joint community room for men and women was contrary to native culture.

Of course, staffs have been inadequately catered for, not to mention underpaid. Modern innovations, such as refrigerators, electric light, hot water

Services and so on are more often absent than present. Even milk for the children, where settlements are established in agricultural country, has been supplied out of tins because there was no money with which to buy milking cattle. The lack of proper table utensils has retarded instruction in manners and deportment. The supply of equipment for technical training has been almost completely absent.

I remember the time when dining tables at one institution having become unsanitary, I sought for timber to replace them. This was refused because of cost, but nice white timber was then being supplied for coffins. It was of the type suitable for table tops, and I instructed that there should be a substitution of one for the other. I often wondered if the apparent increase in burials was noted by the holders of the privy purse! To such subterfuges were we sometimes reduced. All these are little things which go towards the sum of the impossible conditions under which we always work.

Settlements must not merely be places of detention, prison homes for the people to enter when conditions outside are such as to compel them to do so. Neither must they be so attractive for youth as to make life in the community outside seem less desirable – by the apportioning, for instance, of new cottages to every newly-married couple – a

practice in vogue in some States – but they must be utilitarian and good enough to serve the purpose of clearing centres for the young people and homes for the sick and infirm. They must be objective, having the accepted policy in view *all* the time – that is, the object of the eventual assimilation of the people into the community. An entire lack of purpose is largely responsible for the failure of our native institutions to make progress in Australia. Institutions should be able to supply *all* the necessary equipment and conveniences required to educate and train inmates to understand and use the like facilities when they enter the outside world. After many years of experience, one must come to the reluctant conclusion that a bad institution is worse than none at all.

While admitting my fallibility, and bearing in mind that I write of mission workers amongst the natives of Australia only, there are yet a few things concerning missions and missionaries I want to say, not so much as a critic of the work as an indication of the way in which, in certain directions the cause of the natives is depreciated by faults in the system. God knows the pioneer missionaries in our State, at all events, had hardships enough to contend with, as well as much physical suffering, even personal injury in some cases, and one is bound to admire their self-

sacrificing effort, however misdirected some of it might seem to have been. The desperately difficult conditions of thirty and more years ago are apt to be forgotten. Money was hard to get – and thirty pounds a year for the head of a mission is not much! There are some workers still receiving only ten shillings a week and keep, others have no income and practically beg for their sustenance.

First, then, it appears to me to be unwise to instigate a policy of handing over care of the natives to the missions – any sort of mission – willy-nilly. Can it be asserted that past results have justified such a course? The day when missions claimed the natives, body and soul, has surely passed though some are still prone to act as though not aware of it. Changes brought about by the incidence of war – not forgetting the precepts of the Atlantic Charter, necessitate Governments, as guardians of these people, doing their duty fully, and not leaving the job entirely to the missions as they have hitherto been so willingly to do. Missions aided and guided by Authority can take a more useful part in the affairs of the full-bloods than the coloureds, and in any case the State should insist upon the pursuance of its accepted policy, and as guardian of the people ensure their welfare in the hands of whomsoever they may temporarily be placed.

Missions amongst the coloured people, as distinct from the full-bloods, should be abandoned in favour of Government conducted institutions, though I do not mean that the spiritual work should be abandoned.

A state of affairs is growing up throughout most of Southern Australia which calls for revision and which, if left to expand in haphazard fashion, will detract from rather than assist in the object aimed at, that is to say, assimilation. To give the coloured people a mere smattering of education and Christian ethics and little or no technical or hygienic training, as is being attempted at most of these places now, is not to assimilate them into society. Much more is needed than that. There is a vast amount of wasted effort and too little work of a really constructive nature, too much "lip" service. The coloured people need a great deal more than missions, as at present constituted, can supply.

Missions within settled areas necessarily differ from those in centres where only full-blood natives permanently reside. Their inmates are apt to become subject to the grinding monotony of duty badly done, indifferent food, and so-called play. So much so, that the people concerned become either useless from the point of view of their future life outside the mission, or merely cheeky, idle natives. Such missions separate the people from the realities of everyday life, so that when

they return to the outside world they expect something which they cannot get.

In a half-hearted and parsimonious way Authority helps many of these efforts, some of which could not otherwise exist. But charity alone does not do nearly enough, and Authority being prone to leave it mostly to the charitably inclined, between the two, the job is not sufficiently supported. No one does it as it should be done, and the object of our differences – the native – like enough already to drop between two (or more) stools, begins to regard us as "soft" and, shrugging his shoulders, turns again to the line of least resistance, where he was before we, and they, began!

I have watched some pitiful efforts over many years, and only where Authority has employed missionaries as rationing officers, or has otherwise substantially assisted them, has any success been apparent, and not much even then. Some spiritual advancement possibly can be claimed, but those in charge, from a practical standpoint, have been merely acting as caretakers for Authority. Authority is thus in a position to contend that advancement is being made when it really is not, and the little work done is not done at the cost of the Government which is "let out" because the missionaries have pushed in. No doubt, these good people – and many of them are really good

people – began the work because they thought Authority was neglecting it, though it is true that this was not always the case. Ardent missionary-minded spirits needed an outlet for their energies, so rightly or wrongly they began to work wherever they could find enough natives gathered together to make it appear worth while. The churches themselves have not shown much respect for such heroic attempts. Some workers I know, and have visited year in year out helping as best I could, have lived in poor surroundings almost starving, even evoking the pity of the coloured people amongst whom they have been spending themselves. This obsolete system should be relegated to the background as soon as possible, to be replaced by vigorous National policy, the missionary assuming his proper place as spiritual advisor shorn of the harassing practical every-day duties, for which he is so often ill-fitted and the pursuance of which often reduces him to a condition unfitting him to carry on successfully as a teacher of Christian ethics – surely a man-sized job in itself. Very often these isolated jobs are undertaken by women, a fact which emphasises the difficulties.

It would appear that the exigencies of was have compelled the adoption of the policy of establishing missions for coloureds in the North. If these are to be training and clearing centres, well

and good, but if they are to be village settlements, leading to a separate existence for the coloured people as opposed to their assimilation by the white community, then surely there are enough unfortunate examples of this policy apparent elsewhere to make us pause before emulating it. On the other hand it could be that these suggested institutions might become initial centres from which inmates graduated to State or National training schools of a more advanced type, to be drafted from there into the community as workers. Few of those who regard segregation of the coloureds as an end to be desired seem to think far enough ahead and appreciate what may be the position in such centres in, say, twenty, thirty or even fifty years' time. They should ask themselves how this is going to assist in solving the assimilation problem, particularly while such institutions also harbour the full-blood. It is not to be denied that the people may be temporarily happier in their own villages, possibly under their own self-government, but this would seem to prolong the agony, and defeat the ends we desire to attain.

If the training at suitable Government finishing schools were satisfactory, there should be plenty of employment in the North in future for such as these. Already young men have gone out and taken their place in the community, to which before similar training they could never have aspired.

When trained on Government Cattle Stations of the West, for instance, there is no difficulty in placing them under prevailing conditions at current wages.

Coloured girls in the North present a greater problem, but as time passes, if development occurs, there should be a considerable additional white population, capable of absorbing all the native labour likely to be available, but this will not be cheap labour such as the full-blood has supplied in the past ; his trained successors will demand and deserve conditions of living and wages comparable with our own.

You cannot continue to shelter coloured youths by merely segregating it, it must have its own chance in the North, as elsewhere.

Institutions placed within suitable reserves, for practical purposes controlled and financed by Authority under competent supervision and management, having in residence chaplains appointed by the Church to attend the spiritual needs of the inmates and deal with the social aspect, ought surely to constitute the ideal establishment. In the West we have begun this plan, and it is meeting with some success.

But the native is a State ward in its fullest sense – we want him to be a National ward – and the State's duty is to care for him first and last, so long as that care is necessary. The State says the

native must learn to help himself and be helped to do that, not spoon-fed and pandered to or made a mendicant. He must not constitute a privileged class sheltered by Institutionalism, whether it be the Departmental of the Missions type, to such an extent as to set him apart permanently, producing more and more of his kind to be treated similarly.

The State's policy must be to encourage him to become part of the life of the Sate, fully sharing its burdens and experiencing its freedom and pleasurable pursuits. But to do that the native must be taught to live decently, healthily, and by education and culture must fit himself to participate in our way of life.

Any system which detracts from or prevents that process can only result in further deterioration of his position, and the creation of an incubus which future generations of the white population must carry.

Governments have the money, the land, the command of their officials, and the power to administer the law. Obligation by law to educate, feed, medically attend and otherwise safeguard its wards also rests upon Authority. It should see that the laws are obeyed and its regulations enforced by all concerned in the welfare of the people.

The Church has care of the souls in it keeping. It possesses, or ought to possess, trained and

ordained pastors and workers to implement the work of the Authority at all institutions, and encourage social amenities.

The Scientist, with his trained mind and keen desire to exert his efforts in the field investigating native culture and in studying life history of the species, supplies an aid to administration.

Let the Government, then, look to the practical side, the Church take care of the spiritual, and let Science help train and advise both of the nature of the people and its culture, towards whose enlightenment all three are working. To achieve success there must be a policy of "combined operations." Lacking in spiritual and moral backing of the Church, the State's work is incomplete. The Missionary cannot spiritually enlighten his charges when cluttered up with daily doings of a diverse nature of which Authority should relieve him. And both are handicapped if they lack the training which Science can supply. But Science in this case must be diffident. It should seek its material for study where custom and practice still govern the everyday life of the people, and not in the institutions whose inmates are undergoing the process of change. Indeed, many of the natives' customs might well be done without, as definitely harmful to them, and not calculated to prolong their existence here on earth.

My father was a minor dignitary of the Church of England in control of a large Parish in England, where at his Rectory Bishops, Priests, and Deacons were wont to foregather. Missions were a frequent subject of discussion, lantern lectures and talks a feature of the village winter season. We had a large house, and it was often full of ardent advocates of aid to missions. Naturally I imbibed quite a romantic view of the mission field and the workers of the Great Missionary Societies, as well as of such men as Stanley, Livingstone, Carey, Gordon – heroes all to us boys thirsting for adventure ; and there were eight of us, all but one of whom left England for one or another part of the Empire.

I have never forgotten the occasion when a temperance lecturer, instead of a missionary, addressed the assembled company of villagers and others in the large village schoolroom. The patron and owner of the estate was a beautiful and well-known Marchioness, an ardent temperance worker. My father himself was an abstemious man, and both (with several of the neighbouring celebrities and clergy) were seated in the front row. The lecturer began thus : "I see before me the raw material of which drunkards are made –"

The Marchioness gasped, the audience tittered, and my father chuckled, knowing doubtless that the lecturer was partly right. The lecturer got

away with it, quite failing to notice the bad start he had made.

Well, in those my early years I, so to speak, saw the raw material of which the missionaries and missions are made, and I have seen it to some extent since in Australia, shorn of romance and glamour, and after my judgement became more mature.

My first visit to a Northern native mission shocked me beyond measure. Ye Gods! Were these the romantic fields – the “spicy breezes” – I had dreamed of?

If so, they had lost their savour! To think that any people could live and be apparently happy under such conditions filled me with amazement. If anything, it seemed to me that the inmates were on as high a plane as the staff. Humans and dogs fed together, hygiene was unheard of – sanitation almost a myth – medical supplies, and even first aid, entirely lacking. There were no beds for the inmates or bedding, except Government blankets ; no baths ; and there was the breaking down of all the best in the social system of the people.

I had an embarrassing moment when, escaping from the staff for awhile, upon entering a large room I was literally mobbed by big girls demanding that I should “get them out of here.” Late a deputation of young married couples asked me if

they were “compelled to stay in this place?” How they all hated it!

Huge quantities of Government foodstuffs were being supplied to an almost idle community, yet the soil and climatic conditions were suitable for intense culture. This kind of thing was, I found, not then peculiar to this mission.

Time, of course, has brought much-needed changes and improvements, not to mention more enlightened ideas. Indeed, the necessity for improved methods became so apparent to these mission institutions, as they sought to emulate the State's efforts and innovations, resulting in a more hopeful outlook for the natives ; but it has all taken an incredible time.

The missions that I know have not attracted the natives ; rather they have been forced by circumstances into them.

Well-directed State-aided missionary effort is good when it is inspired by a spirit of co-operation, faulty when it is attempting to play a lone hand, especially when it sets black against white. Inspiration and enthusiasm alone are not enough. Natives are quick to appreciate the difference between the false and the true, to recognise real honesty of purpose. With the native, example is better than precept, much of which he does not understand. It will accomplish more than lip service. As water continually dripping on a rock wears it in time, so the

example of workers of integrity, leading lives respected by the natives, has marked effects. An undertaking given by a native to some revered worker in the field is generally honoured because it is made as a tribute to the personality of the worker.

In the course of his official life a Public Servant is occasionally warned off the grass, so to speak, and given more or less direct hints not to proceed in certain directions, however, reasonable it may seem for him to do so in the interests of his duty or charges. In my early years of administration it was "hands off the missions," and so the work was not strictly supervised or interfered with, neither was it greatly encouraged. How could one encourage something one knew very little about, and if all one heard was true, encouragement was not so much needed as reformation?

The Church authorities liked this aloofness because it meant little interference. But that was a position which defeated its own ends because the time came when interference became definitely necessary in the interests of the people and sometimes of the mission staffs. There were some troubles even the missionaries could not handle, neither was their sufficient strength of purpose in the backing of the Churches or sponsor societies.

I sometimes wondered whether missions were needed for the blacks – to convert them to Christianity,

or the blacks for the missions – to create a job for someone. I fear the latter has sometimes been the motive behind their establishment. Where two or three have been gathered together the missionary has often barged in quite needlessly, and the native has become the medium for the advancement of the mission, to be followed by pleadings for the material things of life. Thus a kind of vicious circle is set up – more natives brought in – more demands for help – more destruction of culture and breaking down of moral inhibitions and prohibitions – not to mention more criticism of the State for neglect – perhaps entirely unjustified in many cases.

Anyone in authority knowing intimately the condition of things in some parts of Australia gladly avails himself of any help whatsoever, provided such help is disinterested and co-operative – devoid of the attitude which likens the other fellow to a destructive spirit, even though he is intent upon a similar purpose in his different way.

I have seen missionaries prosper materially through their association with the natives. I have seen earnest, humble workers walking with God, on the poverty line because their very humility and submission to some archaic system kept them in subjection. These were not of the assertive type, but they were mostly beloved by the native people – perhaps working under an egocentric

leader, intent upon his own ascendancy over white and black alike, and professing to do it all in the name of the Master of all humility. This is a species of self-immolation as unnecessary as it is ineffective.

We in the West had to stand up against a bitter barrage of criticism from the churches when, for very good reasons, we insisted that before a missionary or mission worker went on to a native reserve or began mission work in the field, he or she be required to be franked by the Government and in possession of some enabling permit. Some other British countries exercise a restraint having a like effect, and it is interesting to note that Dr. Chas. DUGUID, of Adelaide, in his pamphlet entitled "The Future of the Aborigines of Australia," when referring to the fact that tuberculosis has been spread by missionaries who went north to try and recover from the disease, strongly advises Authority to insist upon a clean medical record for any allowed to make contact with Aborigines.

Time, I think, will prove the wisdom of our insistence upon the suitability of missionaries and workers – of course, quite apart from the religious aspect, with which we were not directly concerned – if it has not done so already, but what a stir there was at the time! Curiously enough, about the time that we were wrestling with the matter, Pearl Buck, the famous author of "The Good

Earth," herself a missionary, the daughter of a missionary, at that time the wife of a missionary, had dared in New York to publicly slate the conduct of missions and suitability of the missionaries in China which she knew so well.

The importance of a missionary's calling and his ability to make or mar his native charges warrants the assurance that only persons of good repute who, after effective training, have passed all pre-selection tests, should enter the field. Furthermore, Authority must be satisfied that they are the right people and not merely be asked to frank an unknown quantity as a matter of form. It could be said with some truth that the Church themselves are careful in their selection, and their choice should be acceptable. Alas! that has not always been the case, and some organisations have accepted people merely because of their willingness to serve, their apparent enthusiasm for the cause, quite apart from their fitness mentally, morally or physically. In sending an army into the field you select the best leaders you can secure, regardless of cost ; and so it should be in the mission field. These leaders in other walks of life sometimes fail and require to be re-called, so the State, as well as the Church, should have the right to initiate the recall of missionaries and mission workers from the field who

prove unsuitable in any important practical direction for the work entrusted to them or who become morally unstable. Why should Authority remain complacent when it is aware that wrongs are being perpetrated, that muddling inefficiency is present at any particular centre? Why, because it is a representative of the Church who is doing the harm, should we withhold our criticism? Are missionary bodies immune to wrongdoing? Can the adage that "the King do no wrong," which is usually applied to Governments, be also applied to the Churches? In this regard, at any rate, I think not, because it is the individual who is always at fault, and not the principle concerned. Such an one should be removed from the field so that he can do no further harm, and we do not criticise, indeed we have no right to criticise, their spiritual work once we admit workers to the field.

If a Missionary is really working wholly in the interests of his charges, results are likely to be good and permanent. If he is just bent upon making a name and home for himself or experimenting in bush or jungle life to suit his pleasure, he will in time lose his usefulness as a missionary – not that he should not be comfortable – he cannot do his work properly if he is plagued by poverty, supplied with derelict equipment and bad accommodation ; but the Churches, or whoever sends him into the field, should see to that.

When our world was more peaceful than it is now, and beginning many years ago, we allowed foreigners without let or hindrance, to come in and do much missionary work amongst our natives which we ourselves ought to have been doing. We rather laughed at such attempts at that time, and did not see why we should do it, or even why it should be done at all – a lazy outlook, resulting in curious repercussions and having marked psychological effects on the natives. There was no restriction upon such people either entering the country or mission field and nothing to prevent them from going where they pleased amongst the natives or upon the reserves already occupied by others of their kind. We know now that this was a mistake and appreciate the desirability of abandoning such easy-going methods. While some of these people were quite genuine, had the best of intentions, did and are doing some good work, others have grossly abused our hospitality to foster ends to which a true Christian missionary could never be party. Speaking some one or two years ago, Brigadier-General Sir Walter McNicoll, who was Administrator of New Guinea when the Japanese invaded it, drew attention to the trouble occasioned by the presence of foreign missions, all of whom, he said, had the same anti-British outlook. We should ensure that in the future our missionaries and mission workers are British in

origin and sentiment or at least possess the same outlook as ourselves.

Churches, or perhaps I should say their missionary representatives, should abandon the attitude that only they can be right and only they exhibit a Christian spirit towards the natives – that no official, however proficient, can be motivated by Christian principles like their field workers. In short, that their people are beyond reproach, and the rest culpable and therefore bad for the blacks.

When they did not get their way, quite deliberately some missionaries and others interested in missions, tried to put the natives against Authority, engendering a hatred of all things white outside the missions and branding every white man as a potential seducer of native females. They provoked a fear of Authority calculated to prevent the securing of information. They used the head of the Native Department as a bogey man – mis-informing the people as to his intentions and subtly accusing him of harbouring designs to rob them in some way of money, privileges or even their freedom. Missionary-minded persons were not the only ones who tried by such means to provoke a distrust of the Department and its officers – this is a weapon also employed by those who break the protective laws, and it is even turned against the missionaries themselves.

Sometimes natives were cleared out of an institution or place of employment prior to the expected visit of an inspecting official in case they might tell the visitor something real or imagined about the conduct of the place or its staff, or were instructed to remain silent when questioned. Elsewhere coloured girls were sent into the bush, hidden in wells or other places. Days, even weeks, have been spent at times in seeking coloured youngsters hidden so that their existence might be ignored, their stories not revealed, or their condition observed. Men who connive at such things fear that their authority or reputation will suffer, or have something reprehensible to hide deserving of legal punishment. Fortunately they are the exception rather than the rule.

Church authorities, in order to protect their staffs and avoid publicity, sometimes hide unfortunate happenings at missions, not only from the public, but from Authority. Admittedly it is not always wise to discuss some things in public, but obviously they should always be brought to the notice of Authority immediately after they happen. Misdeeds, always traceable to an individual, can be remedied by his or her removal, or other suitable action, and need not permanently affect the cause. The native is a moral-minded person by his ancestral traditions, alas! now largely broken down, but he expects us to live up to our own

teaching. Any back-sliding on your part is promptly noted, indeed is continually anticipated, scandal being a feature of all native camps ; therefore it is well that we should know what to expect.

There are plenty of instances of unfair dealing with natives, and our laws sometimes make offences of this nature punishable. If you wish to do the best work your actions must be above suspicion and scrupulously fair. If not, someone sooner or later will show you up to the people and you will be no longer respected, and even if the native continues to trade with you your influence will be gone. The everlasting quest for money has unfortunately rendered the trading activities of some missions of doubtful benefit to the native, to say the least. Take, for instance, the collection of the Government bonus for dingo scalps. Here the natives have not always received anything like the full value of the reward for the scalps delivered to the missions. I knew of an institution earning hundreds of pounds a year by this means, but all the native was getting for his efforts was a handful of supplies valued at a shilling or two, while the mission netted two pounds per scalp. Of course, it was pleaded that the native's requirements were very few, and that is very true, and it is doubtless also true that the money was put to good use, but the fact remains that dishonest trading is discovered sooner or later, as it was in this instance,

with the results which I have mentioned. I have known other forms of trading which, while not strictly unfair in a monetary sense, offered little encouragement to the honest native worker. To me, all such methods are despicable and should not emanate from those charged with the promotion of Christian ethics amongst the people.

In the matter of propaganda, missions have considerable advantage over Authority. I suppose almost every responsible Mission Society publishes its doings in a weekly or monthly magazine or paper – very rightly, too. In such periodicals they are able to describe the work being done in the field, relate touching stories and appeal to the public for help. Authority, of course, has no such means of broadcasting its doings. It perforce has to hide its light under a bushel, unless indeed the stereotyped reports submitted annually to Parliament can be said to fill the breach, which they certainly do not. These are usually of a dry-as-dust nature, and the public seldom has any opportunity of perusing them. Even so they are generally only confined to facts, and thus any good work which is done by Authority is not publicised like the doings in the mission field. This in turn induces the public to believe that the missions are doing all the work – which decidedly they are not.

If anyone doubts this assertion it can be easily verified. In Western Australia, for instance, there are eleven mission stations, whose combined native inmates total approximately one thousand souls. There is one State Settlement alone, out of many similar State activities, accommodating, at times, up to a like number.

Unfortunately, some of the mission propaganda is more subjective than objective in the glowing pictures painted in its writing-ups and addresses at public meetings. Moreover, it is not always strictly truthful. Misstatements are sometimes deliberately designed to promote controversy and elicit sympathy. I once asked a Missionary why he made certain statement derogatory to Authority from the platform of a crowded meeting in Melbourne knowing them to be false. He merely shrugged his shoulders and said it was good for propaganda, and went on to say that they had to get the money somehow! On one occasion, when I was seated in a certain Cathedral, the Dean who was going to preach that morning, came down the aisle before the service and told me he was going to speak about the natives, and that I must not mind because there was nothing personal intended. I listened to the Dean's sermons, and having heard others preached by him about the treatment of the natives, and while these contained much invective against Authority, and criticism of the failings

of Church missions was conspicuous by bits absence. On yet another occasion, at a crowded Synod meeting at which I was present as a representative layman, bitter things were said about Authority in this regard, and I was constrained to ask when my turn came to speak, whether those present were under the impression that Government Officials possessed no souls and to insist that we were just as anxious to Christianise the natives as were the missionaries themselves. There was more than this, but in effect it was suggested that they should put their house in order before seeking to clean up ours, and my remarks received gratifying applause from the large body of unbiased churchmen present. But as to this, what I really want to say is that the public by these propaganda methods hears more in favour of the missions than about the much greater work being done for the natives by the State, and is apt to judge accordingly to the ultimate detriment of the entire cause. Societies interested in the welfare of the natives particularly, gather information by such means and are apt to be misled. Many people seeking information go to missionaries and societies to get it, and accept all they hear in good faith without obtaining confirmation from Authority. They seem to think that Authority's information is suspect! Then perhaps they publish what they hear, misleading the public, and by decrying the

whole business and damning many good workers, damage the cause to the natives generally. In native affairs the appeal to Sentiment often overrides the appeal to Reason.

The suppression of wrongs is not desired, but the truth is vastly different from the propaganda of Hitler type. I have even found mission-inspired propaganda distributed in native camps in attempts to set the natives against Authority.

Truly the missionary needs a strong sense of humour ; he must be able to laugh at his own mistakes, never those of the native – at least in front of him. He needs to know life in the rough, if possible be physically strong, self-reliant, and self-restrained, patient, firm, kindly – a lot to get in one man – but there are such men, and they are worth looking for. He must keep his own counsel, not be garrulous or a busybody, and when dealing with full-bloods not be above calling to his aid the wisdom of the elders amongst his people.

Because distant fields seem greenest, or perhaps more romantic than those close at hand, missions abroad appear to attract the best workers and the most financial support from our Australian people. That is natural enough, and maybe the heathen in foreign countries need help more than do our own harmless and moral-minded blacks! But of course there are many good people in Australia's mission field.

I think the best Missionary I ever knew was not a minister of religion, nor as far as I know an adherent of any particular church. In addition to some Government aid, he obtained support for his mission from wealthy relatives abroad until age and infirmity prevented him from carrying on. In his younger days, before I knew him, that man had bitterly persecuted the natives. He was said later in life to have had a vision which urged him to make amends for his former misdeeds, and aroused his spiritual sense ; and he certainly did make amends. He was a man of the type I have described and beloved by his people.

As it is not always the professing Christian who does the best work amongst natives, so the missionary-trained native is not always the best example of what such training should be expected to produce. Undoubtedly it has produced many good examples, but I have met many natives who never saw the inside of a mission, and had no religious teaching whatever, whose manly rectitude and way of life constituted a reproach to our lukewarm Christianity. Natives are made or marred by handling. The importance of the human equation in its contacts is paramount, and unfortunately so far as I have been able to judge this has not been sufficiently recognised.

It would hardly be cricket to discuss the type of worker needed in the mission field even briefly

without referring also to workers engaged by Authority in much the same capacity. I know how difficult it is to secure good staff, but no pains taken in this direction are too great where natives are concerned.

Untoward happenings are liable to occur at institutions other than missions. Government controlled institutions are culpable, too, but with this difference, as soon as anything is known to be amiss, prompt remedial action is taken, and staff is even discharged when under strong suspicion of wrong doing. It is better to nip a thing in the bud, even though the individual may have ground for complaint. It has been my unfortunate duty to dismiss promptly more than one manager, and not on suspicion either. One Superintendent I had, because he suspected him of some moral lapse, tarred and feathered a native, and he did the job thoroughly, calling the staff to see what a rare bird he had captured. The native was found to be in the condition in which Kenneth Roberts' great historical novel "Owen Wistwell," Wistwell found Thomas Bluell – and like Buell he had to larded and rubbed for days to be rid of the tar and feathers with which the Superintendent had plastered him from head to foot. Needless to say, the Superintendent's services were dispensed with as soon as I verified the facts, but he fled the

State just in time to avoid being prosecuted for assault. A few years later he returned, and one day, when I was in my garden stooping over the lawn mower, the man walked in and offered me religious literature of the Jehovah Witness type. When I looked up and we mutually recognised each other his astonishment was nearly as great as mine. That man is, as far as I know, still peddling tracts, and I do not think that he has ever realised the enormity of his offence or, as others have tried to do, was making atonement by assuming a religious life. That I do not know, but I do know that he was not of my choosing in the first place.

Another Manager I did appoint, an ex-Missionary, and a good man, too, I had to dismiss for chaining girls to table legs. His was not a very serious offence, but because it occurred in the centre of a settled white community action had to be taken, though similar happenings at Northern institutions, including those of a religious character, were not unknown. Indeed, it was found necessary to provide by regulation for the abolition of "degrading" and injurious punishments and the practice of holding inmates up to ridicule, such as dressing them in old sacks or shaving girls' heads. Suicide amongst the natives is rare, but ridicule is provocative of this and lesser evils, breeding bitterness and hatred. Indignities of body and mind cause suffering in a native beyond the

conception of the average white worker in the field.

In the selection of some hundreds of persons for staff positions, I have been forcefully struck by the very large proportion of the applicants who professed a genuine desire to improve the condition of the native people, who, in fact, exhibited a flair for the work. I found again and again that those who had not this inclination remained only a little while, and then frankly admitted that it was not work they cared about - in which case they were best out of it. On the contrary, the majority evinced a desire to do far more than their normal share, and often spent the greater part of their leisure hours in doing something for their charges.

There have been many among heroes and heroines amongst the Government workers employed variously in settlements, on stations and in the field, men and women who have given of their best in the cause, often to retire broken in spirit and hopeless because of their utter inability to make any marked progress. The frustration met with in all directions, the callousness of a system which permitted little advance or even evidence of official interest in their work and charges, broke them in time. Many carried on for half a working lifetime, and looking back wondered why, in their own interests, they had been foolish enough to do so, but because there was in them that urge to

persist in trying to better the lot of their dark-skinned fellows, they had stuck it out as long as they could, to their own material detriment. The missionary does get a few bouquets now and again – the devoted workers I refer to, none ; often they receive more kicks than halfpence. Yet the natives do not forget them, and for long years mention their names with reverence. To know that this is so, is perhaps their only solace for the years of devoted service.

Our Official staffs must be selected as carefully as the most conscientious Church Mission Society would wish to select its missionaries and workers. Initially they should receive scientific training in the character of the native people, especially the full-bloods. Their selection should be devoid of all political influence or nepotism and based solely on their suitability and qualifications, and not on the fact that they may be looking for a job, or possess a "call" which alone is insufficient, though unrivalled as a qualification. I know the difficulties entailed, but when it is remembered that it is the lives and future of human beings, adult as well as children, which are being placed in their hands, you will agree, I think, that no trouble is too great to take in this matter. Some suitably placed institution might be selected

and staffed to provide the required scientific knowledge.

Work amongst natives of any kind is trying and calls for the best in one, and for that reason nobody should be left alone for long in the field without leave. Some men and women deteriorate when given too lengthy and close an association with natives. I have seen both missionaries and others become useless because they have descended the scale to meet the native instead of elevating the native to their supposedly superior plane. In the West we give our workers in the southern native institutions a month's leave in the year and week-ends in addition, while in the Northern hospitals, three, and on stations two, month in two years, besides long service leave are granted. Many workers in missions are left far too long at their posts and become physical wrecks and mental, too, in some cases. Leave should be compulsory, because there is a tendency to immolate oneself upon the altar of duty.

I always advocated the appointment of married couples at all Northern institutions, both partners as workers. At Southern institutions nurses and female attendants or teachers might be single, but it is preferable that they should belong to the married state, too.

I do not think Missionary Societies sufficiently realise the importance of sending only married

people to work amongst the full-bloods. The presence of single men is misunderstood. How can a man be single, argue the natives, because every man has, or ought to have, his woman allotted to him. Likewise there are no unplaced single adult females amongst the blacks, and it is not a question of sex with them so much as the inalienable rights of the men that are concerned. They do not understand how a single woman can travel round alone. Some of the best work is depreciated by a disregard of these factors.

The impact of religious teaching sometimes has curious effects upon the native mind. As the Rev. C. Irving Benson, of Melbourne, recently pointed out, "coerced religion is not religion, for the genius of religion is personal conviction and experience." Many natives seem to think that it is enough to conform with accepted practice only while within the precincts of a mission or settlement. Once I was riding away from a Northern mission, accompanied by a native. It was a beautiful evening, and the Angelus rang sweetly on the still air. I turned to my native companion and suggested that as it was the hour of evening prayer he might feel like stopping for a moment to continue the practice learned at the Mission. His answer was brief and to the point: "No damn fear, Boss; I'm not at the mission now."

Then there is the story of Mary Ann, and this is taken from a missionary magazine. Mary Ann was dying at a Police Station, having been speared in a tribal fight. She cried out once or twice, "Jesus save me!" Then she said, "Might be that Mission feller is a b_____ liar!" The write of the article adds, "We wonder if the last sentence was put into her mind by someone else, but the incident proves that God is working!"

Once a Missionary wrote to me complaining of certain adverse conduct on the part of one of his boys. "Fancy," he said, "after thirteen years' teaching, none of the boys could be trusted!"

There is, of course, the opposite to all this, and I have known quite a number of young people who have been definitely influenced for good by their mission training. I am all for teaching the ethics of Christianity to the native, but ought we to expect him to be a better Christian than ourselves? So many think that a mission-taught boy should be a saint, and expect too much of him ; on the contrary, many regard him as a smug hypocrite, but if it makes for better men and women we ought not to expect a great deal more than that, and we must pursue the teaching if only because our accepted policy is to make them eventually like ourselves.

The native readily adopts the dogma of the particular denomination which first catches him, so to

speak, weak though the impression may be. In the West we tried to divide the sphere of religious influence fairly evenly amongst the various denominations, and most of the so-called civilised native people at least professed to belong to the Church with which at some time or other they had come in contact, though plenty of them had no definite outlook at all. They would object to being told they were not Christians because we mostly call ourselves such, and they can claim they are part of us.

The late J.H. Curle, in speaking of the South African natives, said that "the vagaries of ten or twelve creeds did not go unnoticed by the astute pagan."

I was once taken to task by certain religious bodies because, before a Royal Commission, I stated that, while in agreement with the teaching of Christian ethics at all institutions, I considered that the multiplicity of denominations confused the religious issue in the native mind ; that the matter might be improved by an approved unified method of imparting the tenets of the Christian faith to be used throughout, and that some religious instruction was harmful because it was misunderstood.

Since then the war has brought many of us, both at home and abroad, to thinking on similar lines in regard to unified methods of religious

teaching, and we are attempting to rectify what we have discovered is detracting from our success in imparting religious education to the young.

As in Canada amongst the Indians, one of our greatest worries used to centre on the marriage question.

Once we almost suffered a revolution in a large settlement because a clergyman of one denomination – and, by the way, he was not British or perhaps he would not have attempted it – announced certain couples who had been married for upwards of ten years were to be re-married by him. The couples concerned had been married by a qualified representative of a different Church, in full conformity with its laws and those of the State, and naturally objected strenuously, so it became necessary for me to step in and settle the difference by firmly declining to permit the native mind in these instances to be so drastically upset. This incident points to the difficulties which divergent religious dogma brings to the native people.

Associated with a culture repugnant to us in many respects, the uncivilised aboriginal pursues a spiritual life which in fervour of its observance puts to shame the feeble efforts of our commonplace Christianity. But while the bush black still retains his own peculiar spiritism, his detribalised full-blood sons and daughters are only

haphazard adherents of, or have drifted entirely away from, his beliefs. His coloured descendants have dropped the old shibboleths and comparatively few have learned to accept anything definite in their place, so they remain “between the devil and the deep sea.” Collectively, therefore, the native has great need of spiritual teaching and comfort, even though it differs somewhat from that to which he has been accustomed. Because what appears to be a sin to a white instructor, judged by his own standards may not be a sin at all to our native, doubts possess the mind of the latter as to why practices he has followed for years should be considered wrongdoing. In a state of life in which crude passion and intimidation prevail, “coerced religion” makes slow progress, but Christian ethics may very well be grafted on to the roots already partly prepared by synonymous beliefs. Knowledge and extreme care, the exercise of wisdom which will appear to be wisdom in the eyes of the elders, is essential. Our native people are in this respect unlike the negro who lapped up an adopted religion like mother’s milk at the time of his greatest need, and when suffering intense hardships and cruelties turned to it for consolation with excessive fervour. The negroes built churches, had their own congregations, preachers and teachers – and what spiritual relief they enjoyed! Though our aboriginal believes

that God is a spirit, he has found out in his degeneration that most of those things which he revered are myths, and this has left him a hopeless outlook.

The inculcation of Christian ethics, moral teachings and the like at institutions should not be left solely to specified individuals, maybe the chaplain or missionary in residence, though it is primarily his allotted task. If one or two white members of the institutional staff only conform, and the others do not, the natives are quick to notice the difference and are liable to set apart in their minds the first mentioned as examples which it is beyond them to emulate, and to accept the standard set by the latter. The missionary should be sympathetically assisted and supported by every member of the staff, and the managers particularly should set an example and not hold aloof, as some of them do. The task of the missionary becomes heavier in proportion to the lack of sympathy and assistance supplied by his or her own kind. Disagreements which occur at some institutions amongst the resident whites, and the scoffing at the missionary's efforts are instantly noted by the native inmates, who are quick to imitate and read their mentors. The harm that can be done in this way is liable to undermine all the best efforts of those entrusted with the spiritual training of the inmates. Should the person charged with the duty of spiritual teaching

prove ineffective it were better to make a change than subject him to jeering and adverse criticism from within the institution. His office should entitle him to the fullest respect while he is there.

Mass religious hysteria is not a feature of our native life, but there is willing response to community effort. We know of the corroboree singing in the bush, and whether in that or in singing of hymns and songs in an institution, natives are never happier than in a "get together" party of this nature. It was a delight to hear our people singing the old negro melodies of the Southern States of America, Sankey and Moody hymns and carols ; many of them had lovely voices and were not afraid to sing solo. They ran their own concerts with undisguised enthusiasm. Surely here is material deserving better treatment than it gets.

There are very few fairy godmothers in the native business, but I recall an old resident of Western Australia who passed away and left a thousand pounds for the benefit of the native people. This was at a time when the poor things badly needed all they could get, yet this legacy was used to assist a small Scientific expedition to proceed into the interior to study prehistoric man!

But let us suppose that somehow we have acquired the means with which to establish our ideal institution, and I speak of the material and not the spiritual aspect. There is no need to be discursive – just an outline of what we should do ought to be sufficient for our purpose.

Throughout Australia there are many institutions of which some, remodelled in the light of the new outlook upon the whole native question, could form a nucleus upon which to build afresh, while others should be abolished. There need be no great disturbance of the existing position at first. The choice of an institution here to be built upon, an obliteration or amalgamation there, a gradual but firm weeding out of the unnecessary. It may be that there are already too many such places in one State and too few in another. For instance, New South Wales and Western Australia can be contrasted. To the outsider it may seem that there are too many in the former, and amalgamation might be profitable ; while there are certainly too few in the latter. As time goes on, and the people become fully emancipated, the number of institutions should gradually lessen.

We will assume that suitable lands are already available to us. There are doubtless some excellent existing sites from a building point of view, but those who selected them have not considered sufficiently the occupation of the inmates, the

result being that little cultivatable land adjoins them. We cannot blame them ; it all goes back to the old idea that anything is good enough for natives and probably they could obtain no better sites. But land for institutional purposes must be good and plentiful. Indifferent land requires more working ; if bad it results in indifferent training.

The same principles apply to breeding stock, which must be good. Of course there must be readily available the usual concomitants, such as light and water, not, as I fear, has so often prevailed, hurricane lamps and water fetched in billies from a nearby stream or tank. Water and light must be supplied to every dwelling, and lights should be placed freely in and around the settlement. Climatic conditions have to be considered, too. Many natives' lives have been lost through being forced to reside in unsuitable localities.

Since we have to accommodate man in all his states, the institution must necessarily have more than one section. We will begin with the community portion of our institution, and this should be supplied with all the appurtenances which make for the comfort and convenience of the residents of a village settlement. Cottages are needed for the permanent inmates, and they must be suitably furnished and fitted before occupation. A dormitory or two for single adults may be needed. A communal kitchen would supply suitable cooked

food for all. A bath-house with showers and baths with hot and cold water for both sexes separately is needed, and this provision if suitably placed might avoid having to provide bathrooms in each dwelling, though the latter is preferable. A recreation and reading room, at all events for the men and lads should be there. It could even be available for either sex at different hours. It is better to teach them how to play billiards, table tennis and other indoor games than to encourage gambling by failing to supply these amenities. It is surprising how the men take to games such as billiards, and a table will keep them out of mischief as well as anything else I know. Then you will have your playgrounds, cricket, football and all such sport being encouraged, but it needs to be organised and insisted upon, as at big schools. The life at an institution is made up of small things and trivial happenings, and you must keep your people interested, though congenial work for all able to do it is a paramount necessity.

You will have your technical school, and all must be up to date, properly fitted out, and supplied with competent teachers if you are to do any good. There will be a common hall, large enough to contain almost the entire population, and equipped for picture projection. There will be a church, though services can be held in the hall if necessary, and of course a hospital suitably

equipped not only to cater for the settlement inmates, but the native people of the surrounding district. There must be a maternity ward, and a small isolation ward, but it is not advisable to treat social diseases at a community settlement. Neither should criminally minded Natives be admitted. For these there should be special establishments.

Apart from your community centre you will have your farm and gardens, where adolescent youth can be trained for the future life, and if this section is entirely separate, that is a mile or two distant, so much the better.

Now let us turn to the junior section. Here your buildings must be of good design, suitable for the climatic conditions in which they are to be established. They should be built to an approved plan, and that plan should be firmly adhered to, and be placed some distance from the adult portion of the community. It is a good idea to locate the buildings to all between the community centre proper and the children's section. The child's whole life from infancy, that is, when the mother hands it over to enter the nursery school, up to eighteen years or thereabouts, is to be spent in this centre, and bear in mind that the problem of the existing adolescent will remain until the youngsters first placed in your kindergarten graduate to the top of the school ;

thereafter progress will be more rapid and work easier because you, or others like you, will have handled the child all through. It is the broken, spasmodic training now usually applied which retards progress. The whole is to be regarded as boarding school for youngsters.

Beginning with kindergarten and nursery school, the child will pass on to the intermediate section, and hence to the senior house. The nursery school and kindergarten, or Junior School as it can be conveniently named, is more than a kindergarten, because it will take in all the little folk and cater for them entirely from infancy until old enough – that is, six or seven years of age – to pass on to the Intermediate School. They will sleep in their own exclusive dormitories, have their own class rooms, cooking, dining arrangements and playgrounds – specially selected senior girls assisting under trained kindergarten teachers and thereby themselves acquiring a proficient training. We had such a centre in Western Australia, and its success was undoubted, but its usefulness was restricted because the children, when too old for this section, had perforce to return to settlement conditions, to their great detriment, and mix again with those beyond whom they had advanced on the road toward assimilation. As the foundation of the new life, the emergence from

black to white ways, so to speak, takes place in these early years, the importance of this branch cannot be overstressed.

The Intermediate School, where there would be house-mothers in charge, would cater for children after they had left nursery school up to about fourteen years of age, though age is no criterion with these youngsters. The Upper School, on similar lines, would take those over that age until school years ended and they graduated to the work-rooms, technical schools or farms, still retaining their association with the Upper School, where the influence of the house-mothers would continue to prevail.

The inmates of the Intermediate and Upper Schools respectively would have their separate dormitories and sitting rooms for both sexes ; it is a fatal mistake to mix big and little native children apart from those occasions upon which they are under strict supervision of members of staff.

The intermediate and upper grades would attend a common mixed school, and have their meals in a common dining room, though in separate sections of it.

Playgrounds, equipped with swings and other adjuncts, large enough for all – boys and girls will naturally separate in play – must be provided.

The community sports area, too will be available to the older children.

The older girls, drafted to work according to their suitability, in sewing rooms, dairy or as domestic staff, would attend also domestic economy classes in suitably fitted premises, and once considered sufficiently trained to enter the outside community should, like the youths, be placed accordingly.

There would be concerts, dances or other entertainment in the public hall available to everyone in the Institution, and where, under staff control, mothers and fathers would meet the children.

It goes without saying that a complete system of drainage and sanitation is essential. Natives are very careless in matters of this kind, and in order to maintain health and avoid epidemics the strictest attention to detail is essential – even to enforcing drastic disciplinary measures. Matters of hygiene should be an essential part of an inmate's training.

The foregoing is the merest outline of my view-point, which is that, beginning with the infant, the child should graduate through three different grades, to the final stages of intensive instruction.

Institutions should not be piecemeal. They should be established for a definite number of

people, and should be built accordingly. We should not build for to-day alone, but have them ready for all purposes as far as we can see ahead – perhaps fifty years or more. Hundreds of natives who deserved better things have lived and died in miserable camps before dormitory or other buildings were even contemplated for their residence.

No adult should languish in an institution who desires to go out into the community to earn his living, nor should he be compelled to remain by any duress whatsoever, providing always that he is capable of earning his living outside. Everyone should have an opportunity, and the unseen sympathetic hand of Authority should be there to support and guide. These youngsters must lean on understanding whites. There must be women for girls to appeal to when in difficulties. None must be left to think himself friendless or alone in his young years, no matter how independent he become, as would be expected of him in later life.

Natives are alleged to hate institutions because they rob them of their liberty and divide families, and if that were true it could not be wondered at, judging by the type of institution hitherto in operation, though there are exceptions. Paradoxically once accustomed to an institution they will voluntarily return to enjoy the company of their friends and relatives, or even have a rest, and it is often difficult to induce them to move again. Force of

circumstances often compelled them to drift back to settlements because while outside they cannot get the same consideration that a white person gets. Our object is to train and fit them for a life which will enable them to command and enjoy the same amenities as ourselves.

The complete permanent isolation of natives in settlements will not solve the problem of absorption, and in fact might act in quite a contrary manner because it will tend to weld all people into an ethnic coloured whole. But the use of settlements as clearing houses and boarding schools for the young, preparatory to their transfer to the community to live under similar conditions to our own is quite another matter and it is the object to be aimed at from first to last.

Reconstruction must take account of past failures, which are mainly due to our own neglect to cater adequately for a people whose deterioration is going on under our eyes. We cannot see it, perhaps because, like Nelson, we put a blind eye to the telescope.

CAMPS AND HOUSING

THROUGHOUT southern Australia numbers of our coloured people are living in camps, many of which are tucked away in the country more or less out of sight, while others lie adjacent to country towns and railway sidings, where their presence is often sharply accentuated by untoward happenings or the mendicant nature of the coloured inmates. At all events, strong objection is often raised to their proximity to townships. This camping population continually increases and, whether work is available or otherwise, seems not to make much difference to the deleterious conditions surrounding it. Much has been written and said about these conditions in past years, and it can be taken for granted that the worst accounts have not adequately described the dreadful conditions under which human life spawns and increases like an unhealthy fungus growth.

The Bishop of Goulburn, the Rt. Rev. E.H. Burgmann, in one of his Melbourne lectures, recently said that all living creatures were challenged by their physical environment. If they could not meet the challenge, they died ; and it was

this threat of death that was the discipline of life. I wish it might be so in this case ; that is to say, that the threat of death produced a discipline which would at least stave off death. Death is certainly an accompaniment of the conditions we speak of here, but the prolific nature of the people or what has been called "differential fertility" evens up matters, and life is more abundant than death. Statistics show clearly that the people are increasing, and so is indigence, although wartime conditions effected some temporary improvement.

Illustrative of the outlook towards the native people generally in past years, we find that where it has been necessary, in surveying townships, to provide for adjacent reserves to be set apart as camping grounds for natives, these have marched side by side with the rubbish dump, the cemetery, or the sanitary site. From the surveyor's point of view it was logical enough to place the native camp site next to the sanitary reserve, because where as water had to be provided at the latter there would be no need to supply it at the former, native campers making use of the sanitary reserve supply! Other disabilities can be left to the readers' imagination, presuming they know what sanitary sites are like. The fact that whites would be buried in the cemetery next to the native camping ground bothered our surveyors' minds not at all, though perhaps they wondered

later why the natives refused to live where the spirits of the dead might be supposed to appear to terrorise them. As regards the rubbish dumps, perhaps the view that some of the old tins, bottles and such-like articles might be of use to our coloured friends helped to influence the position. Sometimes the rubbish dumps and native camping grounds were identical. Anyhow, that is the way I found things in the West, and it goes without saying that steps were taken to bring about a better state of affairs by providing sites with water supplies and sanitary conveniences in reasonably suitable locations.

It is only natural that natives should congregate together, indeed they must where they come in contact with our community life. There are many cogent reasons for this, such as the proximity of a rationing station, the availability of firewood, water and native game, all of which influences the selection of a camping site. Isolation is not desired ; indeed, the presence of others of their kind in the same vicinity is an antidote to a superstitious outlook, where fear of the unseen is still an influence on one's life. These people like the companionship of their kind ; they crowd together in mutual misery or transient enjoyment upon the flea-ridden, germ-impregnated soil of their reserves – but yet they do not entirely mix. Broken tribal affinities and family bickering often keep them

apart. They will congregate around a communal fire for warmth and gossip, but to eat or sleep they resort to their own particular home fires, as did their ancestors.

Native camps reek with evil gossip and petty squabbles. For trifling reasons, one here or there will pull up his stakes and select a new site as far away from his own people as he can get within the confines of the reserve. A bush dwelling may even be burnt when the owner is temporarily absent – accidentally, of course! When a humpy becomes too flea ridden and insanitary, even beating the sense of decency and comfort of its native occupants, they will move a yard or two away to a new position, but they will not think of cleaning up the old site ; so bones, rags, excreta, and filth remain to carry on the good work of providing more fleas, germs and disease. What cooking there is, is done on small open fires. The utensils are strictly limited and often unwashed. The character of the damper is reflected in the pot-bellied condition of the children, into whose stomachs it is absorbed when it is mostly hot dough. Meat is thrown on the ashes and eaten far too raw. Clothing is seldom washed – how can it be when there are no facilities for doing so or even vessels in which to carry sufficient water to the dwelling? The human body goes unwashed because there are no baths and often little water,

though a swim now and again in some not too distant waterhole helps a little.

Camp conditions cause incorrect feeding because there is not the proper food for correct feeding nor the means of preserving foodstuffs ; rickets and malnutrition ; arrested development and distorted joints ; skin diseases through exchange of clothing and close contact ; harshness and even cruelty ; burns through sleeping too near fires, and scalds ; hydatids from the presence of too many dogs which live in close association with humans ; digestive pains ; dysentery, and enteritis. Few can feed really well under these conditions, and children affected by them in their early years can rarely be fully restored in their later life. They acquire, besides, a warped outlook difficult to eradicate. You can hardly blame these people ; even whites who know the consequences of filthy surroundings and have been taught hygienic methods are sometimes careless. These people possess no such knowledge, have never been instructed, and do not realise the danger. Dirty habits are not hereditary – example produces this condition. Here and there you will find bright spots due to the fact that some mother has worked at one time in a white employer's house and has there learnt the rudiments of cleanliness of person, care of children, and the protection of food stuffs. For similar reasons better camps are in evidence now and again,

generally occupied by member of one family group, some of whom were trained in institutions.

Attempts have been made again and again to have camps cleaned up and put in ship-shape order, with the appointment of some native seniors solemnly pledged to see that good conditions are maintained. I recall a friend of mine who, over a period of years undertook the supervision of a large native camp for which he even himself provided a bath-house, laundry and other improvements. At first all went well, but in time lassitude, turpitude, or what you will, prevailed, assisted by nomadic habits and changing population. The seniors themselves knew no better ; they had never had a chance of learning. My friend gave up in despair and concluded, as I did long ago, that these people will do nothing of their own volition to improve matters, and that the desire which has often been expressed that we should exercise as little control as possible is a false doctrine. It is, on the contrary, *control of the right kind, over a period of years*, that is needed if the position is to be righted.

The attitude of the mixed-blood is selfish. He will not fight for his kind as a whole. He claims his right to freedom, and coercion is repugnant to him, even for his own good. But surely freedom can be bought too dearly when subject to deleterious conditions utterly bad for him and

a menace to ourselves! Although the provision of better food and efficient care when sick effect a physical improvement, no real mental change in the people themselves becomes noticeable. On the contrary, when these things are provided for them for nothing, why not sit down and enjoy the goods the gods give?

The bush natives master their children and mould them to their will. Not so the coloured people, whose children take their own way increasingly as they advance in years. The habits of the elders are commonplace to them, and before they even reach adolescence, unlike their full-blood bush brothers and sisters, they know all there is to know. The bad habits of the grandparents and parents are bequeathed to the children who, indeed, often come under the influence of grandparents rather than their own parents. The elders are indifferent to the lack of improvement in their children. What was good enough for them is good enough for the children. But nothing stands still, and the position grows worse, evil conditions breed evil conditions. The consequence is that the children throw off all restraint and run wild, to the ultimate despair of their parents, who, alas! too late, realise how much better it would have been for their offspring if some official restraint had been exercised from their earliest years. Parents often claim that the morals of their

offspring are their concern and they can handle matters. Nevertheless, the youngsters give their parents the slip, and they will find their lovers, however far they have to look for them. A childhood bereft of real childish happiness passes far too soon into precocious youth, with its attendant follies.

Some coloured people regard themselves as more advanced than their fellows – nearer white standards. They adopt a stiff-necked attitude, and the prideful talk and behaviour of the elders lead nowhere and often alienate the sympathy and assistance of which most members of their family would be glad. Families even alienate their own folk in attempting to claim all the privileges of the whites when these are not available to them, yet a more modest outlook might get them all they desire. One can understand this point of view, regrettable though it may be.

It has been stated many times that natives, even if given a chance, will always live as they have lived for generations past. That is probably true, as far as most of the adults are concerned. On the contrary, it is not true of young people who have been taught a better way of life. If we teach the children the right way to live they will leave the camps and follow it ; the old people remaining will be the last of the old generation of diehards. Social

parity is not for such as these. We have to reach for better things always through the children.

As the London *Sunday Times* recently wrote, "In a well-ordered State it is of course necessary for certain limitations to be put on citizens." We all know that, and there is no valid reason why this should not be extended to include this small indifferent minority and direct it into a right way of living amongst us. All of these people who take no pride in home or care in the upbringing of their families should be placed in institutions where Authority can teach their children the right way to live, eventually to pass out into the community to enjoy the same conditions as ourselves. There must then be no more permanent camps, though it is necessary that there should be temporary camping places such as we have arranged for our own drovers and travellers throughout, but not for use as dwelling sites. Even then Authority will need to impose strict rules of cleanliness if we are to avoid a return to the conditions which we have sought to escape by the removal of the people to settlements.

It has been said, too, that natives will not live in houses. This is not true of the coloured people, and there are some of them living in more or less decent homes now. In some communities the association between coloured and white has become closer, the coloured children attending the white

schools in increasing numbers, little antagonism being shown to a modicum of social intercourse. These more advanced people consider they are well able to look after themselves, and so perhaps they are up to a point, but the children still remain the problem, and when adolescence is reached, the same old troubles arise, so that they often slip back into the ways of the common herd because their early training had been more native than white. Often the dwellings coloured people occupy have been discarded or are condemned for residence by whites. Sometimes they are devoid of furniture, are windowless and unsanitary ; even so a rent is charged. One knows the effect a careless and dirty family can produce upon a decent house, but such a family is not yet ready to occupy a dwelling and should be in a settlement – that desirable stage of advancement warranting their being placed so favourably having not yet been reached. Yet I know some families living in cottages deservedly taking pride in their spotless condition and which are a credit to any community.

There are many post-war proposals for the provision of homes for soldiers, workers, widows, and so on. Let us hope we can spare a few for deserving native people. Surely there should at least be ample surplus material with which Authority might erect decent dwellings for coloured workers,

particularly those young couples who will graduate through the settlements visioned herein and have consequently become ready to be absorbed into the community. As it is, all a young couple are able to do is to emulate their forebears because they cannot enter the social life of the community – and the social ostracism of the children is perpetuated. Can it be wondered that in such circumstances there is no advance?

EDUCATION

THROUGHOUT Australia education is compulsory, indeed almost every child attends school, that is, every white child, only 5 per cent. do not. On the other hand the native child has been allowed more or less to do as he pleases, or perhaps I should say as his parents have pleased and the result is that of twenty-one thousand odd children only about one-quarter are receiving any education at all, and these mostly at institutions. Exact figures are unfortunately not available. Perhaps we have here, as in other things, allowed our benevolent attitude to overcome our good sense, but I think the real reason is that we have objected to the native children's presence at school beside our own children, and there has been no alternative for them. I refer to this later on.

It has become customary to think of large numbers of native children being educated by the State or at missions, but really the numbers are very small. Even in Queensland, the State credited with doing the most for its natives, there are if we except the Torres Straits islanders now not classed as aborigines, only some two thousand native children out of a possible five thousand odd receiving any schooling. Throughout Australia there are probably

less than fifteen hundred attending State schools outside settlements.

Illiteracy in Russia was rife not so long ago, but Russia suddenly decided really to apply compulsion and obtained astonishing results, even amongst the Asian nomads then living more or less as our Australian natives do now. The result is that illiteracy in Russia has practically disappeared.

In Canada, Indian children up to sixteen years of age are compelled to attend their own residential or day schools.

When the American negroes were emancipated in 1863 something under ten per cent. only of them could read and write, but forty years later fifty-five and a half per cent. could do so in spite of the fact that before and after emancipation, laws were passed in certain States which made it a crime for negroes to be taught. The ability of the negro child to learn was doubted and spoken against by the whites as in the case of our coloured people, but the negro, as soon as he was able to, set out to prove that his white traducers were wrong and proceeded to establish schools and universities of his own, certainly to some extent assisted by well disposed whites. Who knows but what our native people, whose real education has hardly commenced, might not make similar strides under better circumstances.

It cannot be denied that after one hundred and fifty odd years of settlement the figures I have presented show that no very great effort has been put forward by us to amend matters of that hitherto we have pursued a wrong course. That is not to say that those who went before us did not do their best as they saw it to educate the native people. Our history is dotted with praiseworthy efforts made by them to do so, but largely because they did not understand the nature of the native people these attempts failed. Failure in the past was attributable in the main to the view that if the natives wished their children to be educated, they must part with them. This view was not favoured by the natives but was the outlook of those good white people who wanted to do something for them. In earlier times the people were much more nomadic than they are now. Work if wanted was sporadic and only available in certain districts, at other times the natives had to live by trapping or on bush food, while the old men exercised their tribal rights and insisted upon the customary ritual being observed. When any epidemic broke out amongst the children all immediately fled to join their families in the bush to the detriment of themselves and their people. The result of all this was that the elders and parents took their children from the schools for the smallest of reasons, including those I have mentioned.

School indeed was welcome just as long as it did not interfere with such matters, or part families ; it is easy therefore to realise why these early educational efforts, including attempts to establish missions, did not succeed.

The position is very different to-day, although most parents still hold the view that no one can look after their children as well as they themselves, and any scheme which totally and permanently separates children from parents must fail unless force is to prevail, as indeed it must in as far as we are prepared to apply it to our own children.

The parents of to-day desperately want their children to be educated, but in the face of white opposition find this very difficult unless their children enter an institution. It is true that in some parts of certain States native children are finding it easier to attend State schools than formerly, and occasionally small State schools, perhaps to increase their numbers to the minimum required by regulation to enable their being kept open, will admit coloured children, so naturally families try and remain in a district where such a school is available. Since, however, the availability of work governs the position, sooner or later the children have to leave the school to accompany their parents to some part of the country where other work is available, but there may not be a school, and so their schooling is broken and the children

are penalised because it is so. I have known families to return season by season to certain centres where a school exists which their children might attend, the children in the meantime been months without continuous teaching, and such broken time means that they are running a losing race all the time. This kind of thing produces a sort of mental inertia and naturally makes for lack of concentration.

Tribal reasons still govern the position to some extent, as some families will only circulate within the old tribal areas of their forbears. Even should a school be available very little induces some mothers to keep a child at the camp – perhaps it complains of a pain under its “pinny” – she may need it to help her that day – or perhaps the child merely doesn’t want to go. Yet the mother doesn’t realise that she is denying the child the very thing she professes she wishes it to have.

I have been saying for years of the coloured people what Dr. C.E.W.L. Bean has pointed out in his book, “War Aims of a Plain Australian,” that it does not matter what else you do, if you educate you will solve the problem, but if you fail to do this nothing else can help you. I maintain that if you apply the correct intensive training to the people we are discussing for a generation or two they will see to the balance of their emancipation for themselves

The extent to which we are ourselves responsible for the present position throughout Southern Australia is I imagine scarcely realised. Theoretically, native children may attend Government schools, but our people, mainly through such agencies as Parents and Citizens’ Associations have seen to it that they shall not. In the West the objection of one white mother to the attendance of a native child at the same school as that to which her own child is going is sufficient to debar the coloured child. All through the years of my administration this trouble kept cropping up, and recently in Western Australia some two hundred white children were kept away from a country school by their parents as a protest because coloured children were being admitted. This sort of thing is very marked in parts of New South Wales where similar incidents have occurred, and in order to surmount a like difficulty Queensland established some separate native schools.

The attitude of the Government of the States is, in effect, that State Schools are provided for all children of any class or colour, but the Public says the coloured children shall not sit beside theirs at school. Why not face the facts squarely and admit that our own people have good reasons for their attitude, and mainly because it presents a hopeless outlook for the coloured people themselves, that the Government are wrong to try and

force the position in this way. One does not like to think it is merely subterfuge to avoid the expenditure involved in establishing separate native schools or alternatively settlements where schools will be available ; but this is the course which it is imperative we must follow during the transition period.

If you have read my previous chapter you will appreciate the fact that children taken from camps such as I have described ought not at this stage to be forced into schools where probably all or nearly all the children are from clean decent surroundings, and where, if admitted, their education would suffer from a sense of inferiority derived from the attitude of the white children. You cannot blame the coloured child, either because he is not so clean as the white child, or perhaps possesses a different moral standard, simply because he knows no better, neither probably do his parents. I recall on young coloured mother complaining to me that her children had been turned out of a certain school and I decided to test the grounds of their exclusion. Now I knew that particular mother had been in domestic service and was a clean decent woman, so I induced her to try again, but before doing so to do everything possible to render her children acceptable in every way, and I even supplied new clothes. This she did, and when the children were again sent to school, bright and

shining, they were excluded, this time simply on the score of their colour.

It is quite customary to play one thing off against another where natives are concerned, and some warped sense of amusement is derived in the process. Here is an instance. At one small town in Western Australia where there were a number of coloured families, their many children were suddenly excluded from the local State school. The Churches when approached, though sympathetic and willing, said they could not help to educate them. I was appealed to and tried to find a teacher, but failed, mainly I think because I could not offer a commensurate salary, neither was a schoolroom available. It was then suggested that I should take these children into a settlement, and this I was quite willing to do provided certain additional facilities in the shape of extra accommodation and teaching staff were provided because we were already over taxed. These I could not get, with the result that the children remained where they were – uneducated.

Now so long as all this sort of thing obtains it is useless pretending that we are doing what we should for these people. The position is farcical and gets us no further in the direction of the advancement which we are seeking to bring about. On the contrary it retards it. We come up against

an impossible position, and as always, it is the native who suffers.

Education and training as it is applied in present day native institutions, and even at State schools where natives are acceptable, is far from being sufficient to enable our coloured youngsters to compete with white youth in after life, and moreover it stops too soon. It would almost seem as though we were willing to accept Hitler's advice where he says in "Mein Kampf", that it would be an offence against God and man to educate the native for any higher places in civilized life. In an excellent report on native education by Mr. G.R. Hendren, there appears a paragraph which reads as follows :- "The majority of these young people (i.e., those who have gone out as workers) later return to the settlements, marry, and set up home for themselves. It is only in very rare cases that a native is permanently absorbed into the specialist industrial stream of the State" – and again, "it is kept in the foreground at all times and in all activities that his education should tend to make the native a better aboriginal and not a poor imitation of the white man." Later in the report, which is not of a very recent date, reference is made to proposals to segregate the better type of half-caste, provide for them a special course, and experience calculated to fit them for effective absorption into the

general white community – and this is of course what we aim at for all the coloureds.

It is frankly admitted in Queensland, and the same applies in most other States, that youngsters trained in settlements of missions naturally regard these institutions as their legitimate homes, and the natural inclination is to return to such homes unless they can settle down under more beneficial conditions outside. In this view they are usually encouraged by Authority. It is said too that even if the trainee reverts to the aboriginal life again the training has not been lost. But surely since we follow a white and democratic way of life it is our duty to fit the coloured people to our own environment, and take them out of theirs? They must no longer be "poor imitations of the white man," but his equal through teaching and training and example.

But the type of education and training now applied does seem mainly to fit these young people to carry on only as natives, and is indeed so little, generally speaking, that it is forgotten after the child leaves school unless he has a rarely acquired opportunity of following it up. As it is, there is no incentive to do so, and if he is going to live at an institution most of his life, why worry about education at all - it seems to him only a waste of time. Again, the child does not learn a thing about life as it is elsewhere than in these places, and in

that regard is always at a disadvantage when entering the outside community. One even suspects that some institutions encourage this outlook as it is not their desire that the child should enter the community at all, but that he should remain an inmate of the institution permanently, he and his children when he marries, and his children's children ad infinitum!

That is just the position that we have to get away from, bearing in mind that under our plan the child is not going to remain at his institution anything like all his life. On the contrary, we hope he is coming out of it to mix with us on an equal footing and be considered socially acceptable, and because we shall have children under our control for years with no holiday breaks away from institutional life, except perhaps expeditions to the seaside and so forth, we shall have an unrivalled opportunity to inculcate what Professor Walter Murdoch calls "total education of mind and body." If our settlements and institutions are run on the modern lines I have suggested, the child would begin at the kindergarten and go right through the school until beyond adolescence, by which time he should be rendered competent to live like any ordinary citizen.

I shall be accused of being idealistic, I have no doubt, but there is nothing idealistic about it if you regard it as a simple business proposition.

You have so many people to be cared for. Is it not better to care for them in their early years so that they will be no further liability upon you thereafter, than to have to sponsor and spoon-feed them all their lives?

The youthful trainee must have some incentive, must be encouraged to be ambitious and look forward to the future, and if he realises that his passage through the institution is a means to an end which is his permanent acceptance as a full citizen of the Commonwealth, surely before long the majority at least will be drawn away from the fatalistic point of view that nothing matters, towards one encouraging them to do as well for themselves as they can. The parents can share in this ambition – they should be consulted – they like to think they are considered even if their viewpoint is unacceptable.

Those who undertake to teach native children require some special training. This might be acquired at special training schools, or at settlements when the training facilities visualised exist for the purpose, but also, those who would teach native children must have a natural aptitude for the work. There must exist that feeling of a real desire to help these children which I have already referred to when discussing staff. The most proficient State school teachers may not necessarily be able to teach natives successfully.

While training and experience is very desirable, there must also be the ability to impart knowledge to their pupils and hold their interest. I have had in my schools qualified teachers and those with University degrees who failed to impart their knowledge to their pupils and who were totally unable to impose discipline. I have had simple inexperienced country girls able to teach all that they knew themselves, and into whose schools you might walk and hear a pin fall. One would of course prefer a fully qualified teacher, but that does not rule out the untrained natural-born teacher, though all would-be teachers of natives need the specialised type of training fitting them to enter this field. Hitherto we have had to rely largely upon ignorant but willing staff, untrained but willing missionary workers, teachers of ex-teachers from lower grade subsidiary State schools, though in some States the position is improving. Again generally speaking, a teacher has far too many pupils, sometimes up to a hundred, and accommodation is limited and crowded. Since anything involving expenditure has been hard to get, and salaries have often been small, it has been difficult to acquire teachers, a position which must be rectified throughout if we are to do any real good.

Mass teaching is not so effective as individual, and State school methods are perhaps too stereo-

typed. Our native children need sympathetic leading. The teacher must be in tune with the pupil. Talent is latent and needs to be drawn out, not by force but by encouragement. Education of a natural type is imbibed without effort. Some children quite unable to assimilate certain subjects will rapidly absorb others, and it is no good wasting too much time on those subjects they find it impossible to take in. If the work becomes perfunctory and mere routine the native child's approach to it will be likewise. Natives need the best in whites to do any good. One has to hold and nurse the attention, and to break off for instance and tell a story at an unexpected moment, is appreciated. I would say that there can be no fixed school leaving age. One pupil will pass through all stages rapidly. Another equally intelligent in most ways will lag behind. You just teach a child all you can find he can absorb, according to his individual capabilities. Often after fourteen years of age a child finds it difficult to tolerate school. He looks longingly out of the window to the great out of doors – he is not wilfully naughty in this – he cannot help it, his interest is no longer in his school work. Then you must suit your instruction to his inclinations – it may be in the field or some technical pursuit. We have to temper our methods to his capabilities, and the results of this are sometimes surprising.

No doubt the future grandchildren of the present generation of children when they have been absorbed into the community will be quite able to assimilate our education and keep pace with the white child, but the native child to-day cannot keep up with his white competitors, and is normally a year or two behind them, which is an additional reason for this segregation during school years.

The pupil or trainee whose future we are now considering is not the full-blood whose presence amongst the coloured children is apt to retard them. On the other hand the quadroon or octaroon child removed at an early age from the native community altogether and receiving instruction in ordinary State schools sometimes outclasses the white child. To say that the coloured child, who is between the two, cannot be educated to white standards is totally incorrect, though he may take a little longer in so doing. I have secured the attendance at Senior State schools of coloured children educated up to a point at settlement schools, who have had no difficulty in passing out through the highest Senior grades, and who might well have attained University degrees if given the opportunity. There are similar examples elsewhere, but when opportunity is lacking, progress is impossible.

When it comes to technical training the native child can hold his own and should have no difficulty whatever, when it is universally applied, of acquiring all the knowledge necessary to enable him to compete with our youngsters later in life. The native naturally knows how to use his hands, but needs instruction in controlling his efforts. He is rather apt to be rough and underestimate the niceties of machinery, treating a defective motor engine rather like an unwilling horse as though it were wilfully defying him, but when over this phase he is likely to become as competent as any other youngster.

As for the girls, there is nothing in the way of sewing, art needlework, domestic service or kindred accomplishments that they cannot be taught. The trouble hitherto has been that the housewives with whom they have been placed as domestics have been expected to do most of the teaching instead of the institution from which they have graduated so to speak. That position needs to be rectified.

Some mission teaching leaves a lot to be desired, but one cannot cavil at it since it is being done largely by voluntary labour, and has hitherto saved the Sates much expenditure. Nevertheless it is far from good enough, and we shall never succeed in our purpose until the entire position has been reviewed and altered. What indeed have

most of us cared, so long as the work of doing something has been taken out of our hands, and we have been relieved of the obligation.

In addition to a sound elementary education, institutional training ought to embrace every possible avenue of instruction designed to enable the inmate to attain a standard fitting him to meet life in the outside world. Unfortunately many institutions sadly lack the means of imparting knowledge about the very subjects most required in pursuance of this object, and even at some of the best settlements there is little instruction in directions which seem to be particularly suited to the nature of our coloured people – the kind of thing, I mean, which they seem to take to naturally, as for instance the care and handling of stock. The young northern full-blood from early childhood acquires such experience on pastoral properties and fast becomes even superior to many whites in pursuit of this calling, but the coloured people have not had similar opportunities, neither do they get them in settlements as they exist at present, though there is some playing about with a few sheep and cows. Such instruction as is given leaves so much yet to be learned that the half-trained pupil is often a menace instead of a help when sent out to employment. At institutions which go in for this kind of training at all, the instruction in sheep husbandry, the care of dairy cattle and their associated

activities, the recognition of good breeding stock, be it horses, cattle or sheep, accompanied by a sound veterinary knowledge should be both practical and scientific. I can hear someone say, "Whoever heard of natives being scientifically trained?" The answer is that there is just as much need to teach the native youngster how to do these things properly, as there is for us to send our sons to agricultural colleges for the same purpose. Indeed, there is more, because the young native in his early years does not get the same opportunities of acquiring knowledge firsthand as so many of our country lads do, yet his future lies in his ability to acquire it.

Some elementary knowledge of farming methods is no doubt acquired at some settlements where more extensive operations are under way, but even so, only a very few are taught how to handle modern farming machinery correctly, indeed much of the plant is obsolete, and such as would not be found on any up-to-date farm. Orcharding and the handling, grading and packing of fruit seems to be a neglected art, and yet there are thousands of acres of unused native reserves which might very well be thus turned to good account. This also applies to viticulture and the dried fruits industry. Then there is forestry and silviculture for which some of these reserves should prove suitable, as in the West where we

have begun the planting of pines with some success. A love of gardening and flowers, including the planting of seeds and raising of seedlings, the study of soil and fertilizing agents has not been encouraged. With their love of nature it should be very easy for natives to acquire this. They have a deep understanding of wild flowers which would be easy to transfer to those which are cultivable.

On the technical side some instruction in rough carpentering is given, but it does not go nearly far enough and should be more detailed. The same applies to mechanical teaching of all kinds, including motor engines and the like.

One would think that baking would be taught at institutions, but alas! Where bread can be purchased easily nearby, this is neglected. It is generally dearer to purchase bread than to bake it yourself, but it saves a lot of bother, doesn't it? But nevertheless your inmates lose the experience. Sometimes where baking and butchering are carried on, the same inmates are kept on the job incessantly just because they do it well and others are therefore debarred from acquiring a like knowledge. The fact that the training of the greatest number possible is the object in view, is disregarded.

Domestic science should teach girls how to cook, lay tables and so on, but alas! how few institutions really inculcate an understanding of these things. Gas or electric stoves are not available, not even secured for instructive purposes, and good wood or coal cooking ranges seldom provided. The care of infants is neglected, and the staffs are often too impatient to get on with their day's work to bother to transfer any of their knowledge to their charges. That is of course understandable, and there need to be special instructors for some of the worthwhile subjects I have mentioned. One so often has heard complaint from housewives who have agreed to employ coloured girls as domestics that they know nothing at all about a house. It is even stated with some truth that the knowledge of laying and lighting a fire is lacking. As for the boys, it is said that they cannot milk, they cannot ride, they do not know how to chop wood ; in fact, that they know nothing is frequently the complaint, again with some truth. How different it would be if the training were really satisfactory, and how it would help to solve our problem.

Arts and crafts are taught to some extent and are capable of considerable expansion. But this should not be only of a type which cannot be commercialised, and as in some institutions merely

used as propaganda. Individual music and singing instruction is lacking, and I venture to say if it were not so, long before this we would have formed more than one coloured nightingale amongst our girls. Some natives have a natural aptitude for drawing and painting, but this has not been sufficiently developed, yet we have the notable exception of Albert Namatdjira, and he is a full-blood showing what can be done.

Physical training must of course form a part of the curriculum, and it is a very encouraging feature of the work that coloured youngsters take readily to it. This is of the utmost importance, as it contributes so largely to good health.

There is a regrettable absence of libraries, writing facilities, books, papers or magazines which perhaps accounts for the prevalent tendency to bundle the elder children off to bed at seven o'clock or thereabouts, instead of giving them the chance of improving their minds in the evenings. Here again cost comes into the picture. That would mean lights and possibly special accommodation or even more staff.

Taking it by and large then our institutions must concentrate on teaching the young all it is possible for them to learn of what they are likely to need in after life and get away from the existing

idea that there is no world outside, and inmates in turn must be able to demonstrate to us that they can do as well as our own youngsters, because, if not in competition with us, their colour will beat them every time.

It is so often said that you cannot teach natives this or that. When I stated years ago that was going was going to encourage our Western natives to make their own clothing, I was laughed at. At that time many thousands of garments were secured under contract annually, and I could not see why employment in the making of these should not be found for our own people, who, considering that they would be working for themselves, ought to be glad to undertake it. We set to work, and it was not long before only the material was bought, and our girls and women were making all the garments required for men, women and children, including underclothing, best dresses and staff uniforms, and in doing it were of course using sewing machines as efficiently as any white employee. The clothing was distributed throughout the State to all native institutions and indigents, and it was possible to adapt and regulate it in this way much more effectively than under the previous system. Because we had our hands full we had even to refuse request to manufacture for white institutions.

The existing easy-going tolerant attitude towards the fitting of our young coloured people for their future life will not get us anywhere or solve our problems, it is only building up greater difficulties. Looking to the future, education is a life and death matter, and it is through the children that coloured people must emerge from their decadence. The old ways must be reformed and everything about our native educational system be modernised.

YOUTH, WORK AND WAGES

I AM trying to make it clear that I believe the success of our plan of assimilation depends upon the attention we are prepared to bestow in the first place upon the children, and it naturally follows that we must sponsor their course through adolescence to full manhood and womanhood.

If it were possible we would make acceptance of the new plan simultaneous throughout Australia, after which it would be pursued in its entirety, with the definite assurance that all assisting adhered to the accepted policy from which no diversion whatever would be permitted. Thus the children of to-day under expert guidance applied would become the men and women of to-morrow, by then well on the way on the way to social equality with us, with the certainty that their children at all events would be acceptable in every way. By dint of hard work upon our part and co-operation between us and the coloured people, the transformation should not occupy many years, even though there are various prejudices to overcome. In the absence of any concerted plan, frankly, what future awaits all the children closely guarded in institutions at the present time, those existing perilously

in camps, or even those domiciled with their parents under more of less decent conditions?

One of our chief stumbling blocks is the view-point that children ought not to be taken from their parents. Our easy-going, oft-times sentimental attitude towards the semi-civilized natives has hitherto blinded us to the fitness of things, or maybe it is until recently we have never had to consider their future in the light of regarding them as humans like ourselves ; rather have most of us looked at them in the detached fashion of those who gaze at caged monkeys in a zoo.

If we find white families living under the deleterious conditions in which our coloured people mostly live we hasten to hail them before the Children's Courts charging the parents with neglect of their offspring and the children with being "neglected children", or take some other drastic steps to remedy matters. But it is not so often so in the case of our coloured friends – perhaps we feel that some cost would be attached to such a course, and that would be unwarranted in the case of people who are "just natives", so we mostly leave them alone, and the children become poor imitations of their parents. If, however, we cannot tolerate such conditions amongst our own folk, why should we tolerate them amongst our coloured kin?

I am prepared to admit that many children removed from faulty surroundings in the past have not had a much better future than had they been left with their parents. That is because our treatment of them was not all it should have been, and not nearly approaching the standard aimed at herein. Be that as it may, there has always been opposition between those who, knowing the conditions as they actually exist, believe that children should be removed, and those who taking a contrary view look at it from the parents' stand point, regardless of the dreadful conditions under which children are compelled to live, possibly because they are unacquainted with them.

But in our plan the children *must* be considered first, and there are really few instances in which it would be better to leave them with parents, and a great many in which it would be almost criminal to do so. It will be said by some that this is the antithesis of family life, and so it seems to be, but *what* family life? You have to know it to realise its enormity.

It has been said that every child would be better by attendance at boarding school for at least part of its young life, and that is a truism when applied to coloured children. It has been found too that evacuee children removed from their parents very often prospered and developed exceedingly. Tennyson Jesse and H.M. Harwood,

in their book "London Front", suggest that the chief thing in bringing up all children is to remove them from their parents as soon as possible, and as often, but whether we agree or differ with that opinion as regards our own, it is certainly the point of view of those who have taken a deep and practical interest in native affairs throughout Australia.

There was a Royal Commission upon the Native Question in South Australia in the eighteen-sixties, and one of its recommendations urged the removal of all native children, from their parents and their transfer to State Institutions for education and training – they were of course mostly full-bloods in those days. The recommendation was never adopted, but had it been on imagines that the native question in South Australia might have been less in evidence than it is to-day, for at least the native people would have had a chance of reaching parity with us at a much earlier date.

I once had a rather amusing experience with the mother of a neglected child which illustrates the outlook of some of these native mothers. I had found a quadroon baby in a native camp, neglected and abandoned by its mother, and had the infant removed and placed in a home for white children where it grew up to become a well-mannered, educated girl. The mother, who had visited the child occasionally against the wished of the

management of the institutions, managed to abduct the girl now eighteen years of age, with the object of marrying her to a native lad she herself had selected. Naturally, after all the years of effort spent in winning this three-parts white away from native life, I had to take a hand and restore the girl to the institution. The mother repeated the offence, and there was nothing for it but to prosecute her when she was warned by the Magistrate to desist from her attempts. We had many talks about the matter, she and I, and after the last episode she turned to me and said, "Well you took her away from me twice, and I took her from you as often, so I reckon it's square and that's all right, you can keep her now." She was only annoyed because her plans to make use of the child to her own advantage were defeated, and not for any love she bore her daughter.

Here is another point of view. A male half-caste wrote to me urging that all half-caste children should be taken from their mothers. He suggested that in addition to this acting as a deterrent to full-blood women consorting with white men, it would prevent the division of half-castes into two classes, one remaining with the full-blood and the other with the white. He averred that the half-caste male who remained with the full-blood acquired a full-blood wife to the detriment of the full-bloods, and ended by saying that he

would like to see half-castes be men of honour, not of dishonour.

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Hundreds of youngsters haunt the native camps leading useless indolent lives – offering an invitation to immorality, vice and gambling. Mother says she wants her girls to help her. Well, she does not need all of her oft-times many daughters, and she has no house to keep clean and little work to do except prepare sparse meals, the cooking of which demands little effort. Father says, often vigorously and picturesquely, that he can manage his own family, but seldom can, and neither can the mother. As they grow up the youngsters do just as they like, and if parental coercion is attempted, they run away ; father then appeals to Authority to bring back his erring children!

Again and again I was appealed to by parents in such instances almost always too late to do any good. If the parents could not manage their families, untaught and undisciplined, how could they expect us to do so not having had them in the early years? Institutional treatment seldom reforms youngsters such as these who have already reached the age of puberty – they must enter in infancy.

One could not blame the youngsters, they were only fighting for the right to lead their own lives -

to express themselves. Some of these parents are unduly harsh, others over indulgent – hence, combined with intolerable living conditions there exists the ideal environment for the creation of useless human flotsam.

The girls marry young or mate up with lads of their own kind, probably contrary to their parents' wishes, and the old tribal rules, and so the perpetuation of the species is carried on from generation to generation – deterioration accompanying the process. There are slight signs of attempted improvement when a mother has perhaps been raised in an institution, or a father has had some early training, but for the most part there is a retrogression all the time, because there is no incentive to advance – and we must bear in mind that there has been no opportunity for education or training for most of these.

Here is another type of case. Children are left all day and sometimes all night in filthy hovels, not daring to move away from their vicinity, the oldest, perhaps nine or ten years of age, looking after several younger ones and trying to cook for them awaiting the return of their absent parents, ill fed, filthy, unhealthy and untaught – yet when Authority steps in as it surely would in the case of a white family in similar circumstances, sentimental people who fail to appreciate the realities of the

case, support the parents in opposing the removal of such children, these being the last to be considered. When left undisturbed, the condition of such youngsters is indescribable, and if they succeed in attaining manhood and womanhood they develop into weedy, undernourished semi-morons with the grave sexual appetites which characterise them. The supplying of additional food and clothing is not enough in such cases. The food is not properly cooked and the dogs get most of it. The clothing is often discarded by stiff-necked parents. I have often seen dogs almost ready to tear their owners to pieces for their food, and so secure the greater share. Dogs in company with such owners exhibit inordinate desires, and a great many of them would be destroyed out of hand if we were really anxious to do the right thing. Furthermore, the disease they spread amongst themselves and their owners is not inconsiderable.

Now the parents of a family such as I have described go their own way, and if good workers, are generally in employment. They eat good meals at their places of employment and spend their money on doing anything but providing proper sustenance for their children. They probably gamble much of it away. I have in mind of course cases where there is neglect of the children because of the parents' absence, but there are plenty of others where a feckless woman purports to be looking

after a feckless family of five or six or even seven with like results.

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In certain States where mixed people are held in settlements, there are in association with these numerous cottages where parents and children dwell together. In the West this system is discouraged. Officials of the settlements where these conditions obtain will tell you that the system is not good, as under it the children cannot attain to a higher standard than the parents, particularly in view of collateral conditions. Some of these are – the meagre and unsuitable furnishings and bedding provided (its provision is sometimes dependant on the earning ability of the cottager) ; the absence of proper cooking facilities, and unsuitable and insufficient food for growing children, though some items such as meat or flour may be over-supplied. There is an absence of bathing and laundry facilities, and water has to be fetched from a distance. The sanitation is crude and perhaps surreptitiously attended to by the head of the house. The cottages are mostly too small to accommodate growing families, and in some respects may even be worse than large camps - almost it would seem that the unsuitable conditions found in deleterious bush humpies have been transferred to within four walls confining

As limited a space. You will be told that the children go to the settlement school ; so they do, but they spend most of their young lives with their parents in these unsuitable dwellings. Their standard plus what education they imbibe at school remains the cultural standard of their parents. They in time marry and secure similar cottages, and their children are as themselves. There is no advancement under this system, simply a repetition of all its attendant disabilities. Its deadening uniformity gradually accustoms all to the acceptance of a life for which there is no alternative, neither is there any inducement to aspire to higher things. Many of these inmates – some are almost white – should have been able to take their place in the community long ago, but the system has failed to advance them sufficiently for this

Until children are taken from such indifferent environment and trained apart from their parents, no real progress towards assimilation is to be expected, because so many factors, including the character of the people themselves, make it impossible. You will have a struggle to get the children away, even though the parents will be on hand to see them daily if they wish, but believe me, they will thank you in the end, as I have been thanked by parents who resisted me almost to fighting point when I removed some lovely youngster

from their doubtful care to place it in the Kindergarten to commence its upwards journey through life. Once a child is removed it must never return to live with its parents within the settlement ; if it does, all the good work already accomplished will be undone. Later in life it will see the difference for itself. We have to bear in mind that the process does not need repeating ad infinitum ; the child removed to-day will be the parent of to-morrow, and will itself as a result of training and experience be better able to bring up its offspring than its parents were. You must for a generation or more pursue this course if you are to do any good.

Every coloured child then, must be placed at a residential school settlement, and I use the word settlement advisedly, because institutions selected for this purpose must necessarily become what we now describe as Government Native Settlements. The child must be free from all parental control and oversight – it must enter at the earliest possible age – it must be considered to all interests and purposes an orphan. Many, of course, are orphans, and there should be no difficulty in these cases. There will be few exceptions other than amongst those of parents who are already assimilated unto the community. The children

of full-bloods are not of course referred to as coloureds.

Under my plan the mothers and fathers who take up their residence at settlements, or repeatedly visit them, will see their children in sport and recreation, at church and entertainments. They will be witness of the process of their development under the best possible system of control and guardianship. Most of the mothers especially will be glad because they wish their children to adopt white ways – the attitude of the fathers is sometimes likely to be a little more difficult because they think they know best what is good for their off-spring, which generally means putting the boys to work before they are old enough. One feature of the proposals that should appeal to the parents is the fact of their relief from all costs in the rearing of their families. Where the parents are not interned but enter an institution of their own free will, this system enables them to go out to work together, returning when they wish, or when another child is expected, enables the mother to enter the settlement hospital for accouchement, subsequently retaining her infant until it is old enough to enter the nursery school.

Childless coloured couples if capable of looking after themselves in the country, should not require to remain at an institution when work is available outside, unless there is some special reason for

their presence there. They cannot influence the position as it affects the future.

Quadroons or nearer whites, not already properly cared for under white conditions of course must go as soon as possible to institutions for white children and learn to forget their antecedents, and their parents and coloured relatives should be strictly excluded from any contact whatever with them. There is a special home for such youngsters in Western Australia, and this might well be emulated elsewhere.

Many working half-caste girls having infants fathered by white men came to me to discuss the disposal of their children. When I explained to them that separation was inevitable for their children's sake, most of them saw the matter as I did, and, on giving them up, made a promise not to molest them in any way. I found that these children in their new surroundings had no difficulty in comporting themselves as white children, and any picture of their mothers which they might have retained at first rapidly faded from their minds. They attended the State schools and many of them were well above average in their work. In later life there was a possibility of a meeting between the children and their mothers, but though this was unlikely, by that time both would realise the position sufficiently well to avoid any adverse consequences from it. Some of these near white

children were adopted by childless white couples, and that too is all to the good. Quite a few mothers went to service in the country having their children with them, and this plan worked well enough in the early years, difficulties arising as the children grew older, eventually leading to separation.

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Heredity produces physical results, many of which are subject to correction by modern medical science, while the influence of environment can perform miracles. Take the native child in infancy and it will grow up as you choose to train it, antecedents influencing its life not at all, being completely forgotten. The coloured child brought up completely as a white in congenial surroundings until after attaining full maturity will seldom revert, but should its training stop short of adolescence, some adverse human influence may cause a cultural reversion to type of an undesirable character. When that occurs, recovery is doubtful and it is necessary to ensure that it shall not happen. As it is now, much good work stops too early in life, and after-care, so necessary when a young person leaves an institution or the control of those responsible for his or her upbringing, is too often lacking. The youngster is apt to find himself as in an oarless boat adrift on a wide sea.

He turns to the first agency which extends a hand whether that agency is good or evil. After-care is of the utmost importance, but is insufficiently recognised as being so by those very persons who, by their protestations and avowed intentions, should be able to see it, before all others. The State's legal guardianship ceases at twenty-one years, after which the young person can come or go at will, a very dangerous period in life when that person is native born. To bring youth to a state of life equivalent to our own and then cold shoulder and deny it admittance to our social life is cruelty of a mental type such as the best of the coloured races have been made to suffer too often. It were better perhaps never to have made the attempt.

Training should not stop when school is finished with. It should be persisted in until the youth or girl is able to begin to earn a living, feel they can face life out in the world and meet with success. There after some will return to institutions as unemployable, or for other reasons – some will drift back to native camps, but a repetition of the boarding school process and after-training, in all their children's cases will, in a comparatively short time, completely alter the position and result in a big step forward. It must be a process which is complete and continuous to be effective. After two or three generations have pursued it, the

advance should be so great that families should then be living like the rest of the community, acceptable to all and without reproach. It will have raised the social and moral outlook of the coloured people generally – instilled into them a sense of usefulness and a desire to create homes in accordance with white standards, and encouraged them to ensure that their children shall have the same opportunities as white children. It will enable them to realise the shocking conditions under which their parents and grandparents lived and suffered. In short, it will complete their emancipation. The existing retrogression can thus be arrested,

It is of course a fact that something has been done and is being done on these lines, but only sporadically and imperfectly. Unless it is soundly based as a universal and continuous system,, results are likely to be regrettably slow and subject to constant reverses – an interminable process fraught with all kinds of difficulties for the coloured people and ourselves.

Life is full of difficulty for the coloured girl who goes out into the world to work. During many years I watched over the destinies of the native people of Western Australia, many native girls I had known since infancy and guided as legal guardian to adolescence were brought to their

downfall by irresponsible whites. Some were unwillingly induced to yield to the superior intelligence of those who should have known better – their employers – married men with families – even their mentors. One wondered why their conquest was so easy since they used no sex appeal and sought no such alliances. It was, I think, sheer ignorance and simplicity which played their part in teaching them the facts of life.

It has been usual for thoughtless people to damn coloured girls as voluptuous men hunters – to credit them with illegitimate offspring far beyond actual fact. A prominent Australian weekly journal not long ago described them as a “potential danger to all men”, a monstrous libel upon girls who are no worse in this respect than their white sisters. Actually, as regards illegitimacy, there seems to be only a fractional difference between coloured girls and white girls, and in view of the factors which accompany such a review and must be considered, the balance is, I think, in favour of the former. A knowledge of sex matters is possessed by the white girl to a far greater extent than by the native, who in some cases still believes in the incarnation of spirit children entirely apart from sex, and has no knowledge of birth control methods. Some coloured girls are man shy, an inheritance from their ancient ancestry, and few deliberately invite attention when not encouraged

by some member of the opposite sex intent on their seduction. I never heard of but one coloured girl being induced to enter a house of ill-fame. Some of those who bore infants fought gamely on through life, adored their offspring and swore to protect them from a similar fate – becoming better women, good mothers, and eventual wives. There were very few whose lives were completely ruined. For myself, bitterness against my fellow man followed many a heartbreaking interview.

Of course there are hardened cases amongst these girls as amongst our own. More than once it was said to me by such girls : “Well, the white girls do it – why not me?” It is hard to answer such a question! Anyway, what right have we to expect that these girls should turn out so much better than average? As natives in their unspoilt natural life, their system would have protected them. Brought into civilization, they come up against unexpected trials and temptations which we try to counteract by teaching moral principles, at least as far as those at institutions are concerned.

A point well worth noting is that with these people the greater the neglect on our part, the more irresponsibility has there been on theirs. Example has more followers than precept!

Unfortunately at some institutions, girls are treated as fallen women before the fall, because they might fall! Hence the reluctance exhibited to let them go out into life to make their own way, and the desire to bring about early marriages between them and male inmates, with whom they are only allowed to associate with a view to matrimony.

There are at some institutions, middle-aged women who entered years ago as children or who were born there, and who will die there as others have died before them, never having had a chance to really live. They might fall and that would be terrible!

Imagine what it means to these children of nature such as our native people who are wont to live and roam in the open always, to keep them within confined areas from childhood to the grave. It is worse than keeping a bird in a small cage, because you can't compel the bird to work, and you feed and pamper him to make him sing or become used to his conditions. But the female must work, work, work, day in and day out for a lifetime without reward, excepting mere subsistence, lacking money and the right to purchase and enjoy pretty or useful things. True, she is educated up to a minimum, but what use is that to her? She cannot get books or papers at will, is seldom left alone, and is completely under the domination

of her mentors as was any slave in the stormy days of America.

An Archbishop once said publicly in Perth, "Girls would not be reformed by being sent out to institutions where they were compelled to scrub, scrub, scrub morning, noon and night. They must be treated like human beings ... " Well, whether it is scrubbing, washing or other work, it is all the same in its deadening effect upon the inmates, and most of the girls I speak of were never in need of reform, they had done nothing wrong – unless being a native is so regarded – but that they could not help!

If we expect these young people to emulate the best in our way of life we must give them as good a chance of development as we have had. For my part, I determined long ago that inmates of settlements should be free to try and improve in life when we had done all the initial training we could for them – even though we fell short in this respect. There were always a few who for various reasons were unemployable or who had been given their chance and failed to benefit by it, and who remained to assist with the institutional work. Even these were given a second or several chances to make good outside and surprisingly, some of them did when they found their proper niche.

We sent out hundreds of youngsters who have merged into the life of the community. The community has benefitted by their labours, and they have enjoyed freedom in a new life presenting difficulties at times, but offering infinitely more than that from which they sprang or recently lived. There were those who fell by the way, but even so I would rather risk failure than see anyone deprived of their chance. I would rather inspire them to go out and take what life has to offer them in reason and by their own efforts, than see them subjects of a soul-destroying system of perpetual suppression throughout their lives.

During school years it is not necessary to separate boys and girls during daylight hours at settlements where supervision is efficient, to do so merely emphasises sex distinctions. On the contrary the ability to mix freely in their early years helps dissolve any inherited tribal or spiritual ascendancy which boys might claim or appear to exercise over the girls. At our settlements, though the boys and girls of course had their separate dormitories, bathing rooms and so on, they unitedly attended school, meals, church services, and had their social amusements in common. There are, I know, places where girls are rigidly excluded from association with the boys, but this seems to me as unwise as it is unnatural, and sometimes

leads to unexpected happenings. Children of both sexes running together in their early years have no inducement to arrange clandestine meetings and exhibit little desire to do so, because they can speak to one another at almost any time during the day if they wish, and that secretive erotic sense so much in evidence in some institutions when the sexes are totally separated is entirely absent during these early years. Under any system, difficulties arise when inmates reach the age of puberty, and it is then that partial separation should begin although there can still be meetings for social events, sports or religious services, still of course under supervision, and in many cases under the watchful eyes of resident parents. When that stage was reached, we used to send the boys to our farms, and the girls to begin their preparation for work outside the settlement, both ultimately when fitted for it being placed in suitable employment. During this training period meetings between the sexes often resulted in an expressed desire for matrimony, and in such instances the young people were advised as seemed best in their particular cases, a probationary period of engagement usually being arranged because it was considered that the early marriage of youths who had not proved themselves capable of maintaining a wife outside the settlement or who had no experience of life in the general community would only hamper them.

It is obvious that if marriage were permitted at that early stage, either the young couple would leave the settlement totally unprepared for life outside, or, as is so often the case, settle down permanently within the institution and proceed to raise a family. This is most undesirable, and simply prolongs the whole process indefinitely. Marriages of course were often arranged between boys and girls who had gone out and made good, and who knew that, should they have children, they were at liberty any time to bring them back to the settlement for education and training, and my plan of course insists that this shall be the case at present. There is some difference in the practice of disposing of young people reared in settlements in different States. For instance, one State builds cottages for newly married couples and lets them live therein and multiply in comparative idleness. Another deems it best for the young people to be employed solely within a settlement ; yet another lets them roam though they may live at the settlement when there is no work for them. Again some trainees are sent to work outside and refused re-admittance – simply written off so to speak.

There is a considerable pool of potential labour within the coloured community, and it is our duty to train and divert it into channels where it can be most usefully employed. Even the training such as has been so far applied has enabled hundreds

to go out and earn their living honourably, though their social acceptance has not yet been attained.

A good home with a kindly mistress is heaven to a coloured girl of the right type, yet failures are often due to the attitude of employers and their families. It does not help matters much to have the children in a family refer to their mother's coloured help as a "dirty black nigger" or a "black bitch" – such are amongst the complaints that girls used to bring to me. The boys too were accustomed to have insulting expressions hurled at them, were accused of misdeeds for which they were not responsible, sold inferior goods at high prices, even tendered ten shilling notes when they should have been pounds, they not recognising the difference. Mean tricks of all sorts are tried out by some mean-souled whites. One lad told me that when he asked for his wages, the Boss said, "What does a black ---- like you want with money, you ought to be shot." Now and again a youngster decamped from employment, returning to report to us ; investigations were at once made, and I must confess that as regards some of the homes I personally visited, I could not blame the employee, indeed I felt like apologising to him for being the means of placing him in such a position. You must agree that our young coloured workers should be protected from this sort of thing. On the other hand there is most praiseworthy kindness,

almost indulgence, shown by people who understand, and a lasting bond of affection is often established between a girl and her mistress and the children she has charge of. The response of the young workers to such treatment is an indication of the way in which they would react to universal treatment of the same type.

These young workers do not expect to be petted, their past has not included this, and it would be construed as weakness. As the State is his guardian, the worker knows, and so does his employer, that if he complies with his guardian's directions all should be well ; the trouble is that sometimes employer and employee both kick at Authority's conditions, though generally speaking the system works well. It is absolutely necessary for Authority to exercise oversight until the youngster is able to fend for himself.

A very necessary corollary to the employment of young people is the provision of resident hostels to which they can repair when temporarily out of work and a new engagement is being sought for them. There is such a home in Perth for girls, and its success has been a highlight of the administration. Failing the provision of such homes, there are only the institutions for the youngsters to return to, and since advancement is our watchword, it is better that frequent re-admittance to settlements should be avoided. Youths need these

homes as well as girls. This Perth home is also used as a finishing school for young girls in the final year of training, and to accommodate country girls who come to town for their holidays or perhaps to secure medical or dental attention. Its matron is a trained nursing Sister. Its situation in the City does not denote that the City has first call upon the services of the inmates, because employment within the metropolitan area is barred. The Native Department, charged with the duty of placing these youngsters deems it best to keep them in the country.

Nothing can raise the self-esteem of the young native better than to feel that he is maintaining himself by his own efforts. I have seen this in many youngsters now living lives of dignity and self-respect. The fear and trepidation aroused in the initial engagement gradually disappears in rendering willing service to a fair employer, successive advances in wages further winning the confidence of the employee who appreciates the trust of the employer. Would that all employers of such labour realised how much the shaping of such young lives lies in their hands! A few years of services with reliable whites who appreciate the origin and disabilities of their young charges, stamp their effects upon them for all their after lives. This psychological effect in such cases is beyond, I think, any that may appear between

employer and employee when both are white, and for that reason then employer of a coloured youngster bears a greater responsibility, though he probably does not appreciate this. There will always be good and bad employers. There are those who because the employee is a native, offer conditions one would not subject an animal to. Such an one knows that he could get no white employee to endure the conditions, so he decides to get a native. On the other hand, there are those who because the employee is not white, do far more than is customary to ensure his welfare, and fortunately this type is in the majority. Then there is the employer who expects the coloured employee to be the perfect example of what he should be, and abuses him because he is not. Rough usage sometimes brings about the desired result, but destroys all confidence and mutual liking, and the employee will break away in time. It is of course Authority's job to see that the bad employer is eliminated.

Many a time it has been said to me by employers of native labour, particularly full-blood labour, that money is no good to a native, and various excuses were proffered for not paying a monetary wage as of course is customary throughout a large part of the North. It was said too that one white employee was worth at least two natives, and that

native labour was not cheap labour, because so much provision other than monetary wage had to be made to them. Most of this talk is so much hooey. It is purely an economic question, and if white labour were beret and cheaper than native labour for certain classes of work, why in the name of goodness isn't it employed, and the blacks allowed to go their way. The fact is that so long as healthy strong natives are available to do the cattle and sheep work of the North for their keep, clothes and tobacco alone, so long they will be employed in considerable numbers, unless Authority intervenes. But the principle of not paying a native a monetary wage defeats its own ends in time, as for instance the fact that in the North-West of Western Australia, that is the district south of the Kimberleys, there are native workers earning as much as four and five pounds per week, and it has become the custom simply because of competition for it, due to the comparative scarcity of workers, and also because these native workers have proved themselves as competent as whites. The same thing will happen further north ; in fact, individual natives are already being paid there in order to retain their particular services. The excuse for not paying a monetary wage is of course that a native of the far North does not know the

value of money. Well, if he does not know now, he will before long, particularly since under war time conditions some number were paid a wage. The principle of not giving money to a native because he is one will not bear close examination. When I was a small boy I remember my elder brothers egging me on to enter the village tuck shop to ask how much were the penny Jew's harps, these things being displayed in the window with the price attached. Of, course, on proceeding to comply, I had to stand the ridicule, but the point is that I did not know the value of a penny any more than does a native who may be given a shilling when he ought to be given two. Like me, they have to learn the value of money, and my experience of those who have already done so it that they are able to use it just as reasonably as anyone else, though there are always unprincipled people waiting to take them down. It is for that reason that Authority must guard their earnings until they can safely be allowed to look after their own interests. I do agree that the giving of money to a deliberately idle native is unwise, because as long as such an one can earn a few shillings now and again, and still secure rations from the Government, he will not work seriously. Many northern workers on pastoral properties do well enough without money, because a good employer

Sees to it that they are well provided for ; but there is the contrary picture where a parsimonious employer provides just sufficient sustenance to induce his employees to hang on and who possibly for reasons not even remotely connected with their work desire to remain in that locality. However, I have no doubt that in this post-war world this matter will be righted, as indeed it must if we are earnest in our protestations for the uplift of native people generally. Surely we should set a good example by beginning at home, and give the native workers some monetary reward in addition to the other benefits they also receive which in the aggregate would amount to at least the minimum wage. On the other hand if the standard is placed too high, work for the native might be scarce and his place taken by others. It is a principle which requires to be applied reasonably and gradually.

Speaking of the native generally, it is a fact that small wages beget small results. If you pay a native less than you would pay a white man, and the native is intelligent and knows the value of the work to be done and is able to do it, he will see to it that you do not get the same results as you would from the white man. Why, he argues, should he not get paid the same wage as you would have to pay a white if he were available, particularly when he knows that he can do the work as

well. It has taken many years to bring about this position which inclines people to believe that many good working natives will not work. It is not that, but it is that he has become alive to the position. Notwithstanding the views of the Arbitration Courts and others concerned, if a native perform a certain class of work as well as his white competitor, why should he not receive an equivalent wage? It is nobody's business to suit his wage to his standard of living in a democratic country. Besides how can he improve his standards if he is underpaid? It may even be that he would spend his money more wisely than the other.

In the semi-slavery period of the past – and one can call it no less – with its attendant horrors – blackbirding, pearl diving, forced labour and the like – thousands of natives lived and died that others might benefit by their labours and often become wealthy. The untold ignominies and cruelties often inflicted in the process accompanied a bare existence, the only gain for the native worker who toiled from dawn to dark. It may be argued that natives were free to come and go as they would, and that was true enough in a sense, but many employers ensured that there would be circumstances which compelled employees to remain in their service as long as they desired them to do so. I can almost hear the answer

to this, "That's sheer bunk, I always did so and so." Maybe you did, my friend ; there were always good employers, but there were plenty who were not, and did you ever regard the native as other than merely a means to an end, the end being entirely to your advantage and never his? Did you ever really think about his hours of labour, his housing, the provision you otherwise made for him except in terms of £ s. d.? You excused yourself by saying, "He has always lived like that ; he doesn't want anything else ; it is good enough for him," in complete forgetfulness of the fact by destroying his family life, detribalising him, robbing him of his natural rights, even his women, you killed the most important things in life for him, his customs and culture. That naturally kindly, gentle being was unable to stand up against you, circumstances bent him to your will, and when he was old and done, many of you, though not all thank God, cast him off to fend for himself or seek meagre charity from the State. The same thing applies to the coloured man in a lesser way ; though many of the earlier settlers were very good to their coloured workers and their families, those who followed them did not emulate their predecessors and the unwanted coloured man in his old age has been cast aside to ends his days forlornly in some native

camp, all his years of toil having profited him nothing.

The elders of to-day have not much to look forward to, and it is for us to see that youth does not share the trials and tribulations its seniors have had to bear.

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Owing to lack of training and continuity of employment some native workers become irresponsible regarding matters small in themselves but important from an employer's point of view. These include the wanton destruction of timber, breaking fences, camping sheep on poison country, neglecting stock water, omitting to turn off mills and taps, setting fire to country or clearing up after camping, over-riding horses or riding horses with sore backs, and so on, as well as ignoring debts and taxation. These are some of the things that create a bad impression, but their disappearance can be counted upon when we take up the cudgels for the young workers as we should. These drawbacks however are far outweighed by the splendid services rendered by thousands of natives throughout Australia as cattle and sheep men, horse breakers, drovers, fencers, mill hands, mechanics, motor and truck drivers, even drivers of modern road-making machines, soldiers, boatmen, boat builders, carpenters, clerks, and in most

semi-skilled branches of ordinary labour. The women are to be found employed as domestics, cooks, sewing hands, hospital nurses and sisters, and in similar capacities. Our coloured man is however no agriculturalist which in itself seems strange, but it must be remembered that his aboriginal forbears believing that they derived their sustenance through the increase of nature's bounty by spirit agencies to whom they appealed through the observance of rights, saw no necessity for, indeed had no knowledge of, the cultivation of the soil. But even the bush natives are beginning to learn ; I have known them to take seeds from such plants as melons from our stations in the North and plant them in what they thought to be suitable places in the bush. But in my State I never knew a coloured man to become a successful farmer though I believe there are some elsewhere. I have often enabled natives to secure land for agricultural purposes only to find that such areas have been used merely as camping grounds for the owner and his friends. They seldom got beyond the stage of providing a rude dwelling and some shelter for their dogs or other animals they might possess. Contrary to this, the coloured man, when instructed, becomes a good and skilful farm labourer, and of course we know that hundreds are following this occupation. It is very

well done by some, but even this is a calling to which they do not take naturally. Therefore, they must be taught from the earliest years if they are to be of real value for this class of work, perhaps eventually to own their own farms. There is plenty of scope for all the coloured lads in Australia in farming alone, provided they are given the necessary instruction from the time they finish with school.

NATIONAL CONTROL

IN modern times the Union or Federation of a practically homogeneous continental people has usually resulted in the remaining indigenous inhabitants scattered throughout the entire Federated territory being transferred to the care of the newly established Federal or National Government. So it has been in the United States of America, Canada, and the Union of South Africa. While initially the Indians in America and Canada had a pretty bad time, under Union and Dominion control they seem to have taken on a new life amidst an understanding community, because of the competent handling of their problems. South Africa is nobly struggling with a vast problem, hoping to bring enlightenment to its numerous native people. Achieving Dominion status, New Zealand has dealt kindly with her Maori native race, indeed has set an example for others to follow. Australia with its differential treatment of the aboriginal people, offers an unparalleled example of inefficiency because of it. Had the States handed our natives over to efficient National control upon the foundation of the Commonwealth, doubtless their condition to-day would have been very different to what it is, and their advance at least as great as that of kindred peoples elsewhere.

I have failed to discover why the administration of native affairs in Australia was not made a subject of discussion during the deliberations preceding Federation. On the contrary, it would seem that the claims of the people of the aboriginal race were by common consent deliberately ignored when the terms of the Commonwealth Constitution were under consideration, and so the Federal Parliament was by design prevented from passing legislation with respect to them in any State. It is difficult to appreciate the reason for this exclusion unless it be that the framers of the Constitution were supplied with entirely erroneous information as to the character and number of the indigenous people then present in Australia. It was at that time believed that scattered throughout the Continent there were only some forty-one thousand aborigines, a figure which was completely incorrect, as disclosed by subsequently acquired information. For instance, the number of natives then credited to Western Australia was about five thousand when there were actually nearer forty thousand. There were uncounted thousands in North Australia. In the Eastern States, the native people were thought to be rapidly dying out, and it is true that during the ten years immediately preceding Federation this seemed to be the case. But later periodic investigation proved that the full-blood aborigines were gradually decreasing in

numbers through the years, while their coloured descendants were increasing in greater ratio, so that the total native population soon showed a considerable advantage upon the 1901 estimate. One can well understand that in accepting the view that the natives were rapidly diminishing and would soon completely disappear, it was not considered worth while doing anything about the matter.

But the interests of the indigenous people had not been forgotten by others. In 1911 the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science recommended that an organised scheme for their future be formulated and submitted for the consideration of the Federal and State Governments. The Committee of the Association which considered the matter expressed itself as deeply convinced that the problem would be more effectively solved when all that was left of the race, by that time known to number seventy-five thousand, was made a single National responsibility and cared for on a National system. It was further affirmed that for the first time in Australian History it should be possible to treat the aborigines problem as a whole and on a systematic and scientific plan, and that a national sentiment of sympathy and pity would be created towards this unfortunate dispossessed race. Presumably the resolution was submitted to the various States, and I know that

Western Australia, at all events, expressed itself in full agreement with the proposal. Indeed, the Government of that State was then prepared to consider favourably the introduction of a measure enabling the Commonwealth to assume control by virtue of paragraph thirty-seven of section fifty-one of the Commonwealth Constitution, which enable the Federal Parliament to make laws concerning matters referred to it by the States, but so that the law shall extend only to States by whose Parliaments the matter is referred, or which afterwards adopt the law. If that course were possible then, it has surely been possible since, and whether individual States have sought to make the transfer or not one can only assume that all have never been of one mind in the matter.

In 1927 a Royal Commission was appointed to consider certain aspects of the Commonwealth Constitution, and amongst the subsidiary subjects examined was that of the control of aborigines. The Commission was composed of seven persons, and a majority of these recommended that the Constitution should NOT be amended so as to empower the Commonwealth Parliament to make laws with respect to aborigines. But three members of the Commission disagreed and submitted a contrary recommendation. They thought that the National Parliament should see that all carried

their fair share of the burden in respect to the displaced native race, and should accept the responsibility for their well-being. The majority recommendation, while recognising that the effect of the treatment of the aborigines on the reputation of Australia furnished a powerful argument for transference of control to the Commonwealth, considered that on the whole the States were better equipped for controlling them ; that as the States controlled the police and lands, and to a large extent the conditions of industry, the States were better qualified to exercise control.

Time has shown I think that the minority were right, and that the contrary reasons expressed by the majority were weak and open to question. The argument that the States control the lands surely cannot stand since the Commonwealth acquires the lands it needs in any part of Australia. The States' control of the police is an equally weak argument, because I imagine any central administration would not require to use the services of the police to anything like the extent that the States have done in the care of their indigenous people. In fact, it would have been a golden opportunity to get away from a system which from its very inception has done more to retard the progress of the native people than any other. I refer to these matters later.

It was made quite clear to those who attended

the Canberra Conference upon Aboriginal Welfare in 1937 that the question of National control was a subject to be avoided, in other words, that the Commonwealth was not then prepared to assume such control, and in substitution therefore the question of granting financial assistance by the Commonwealth to the States to assist in bearing the cost of caring for the natives was considered at some length, and resolutions were adopted to that end which are still waiting fulfilment.

During the past decade or so quite a number of interested people and societies have been urging the Commonwealth to take over the care of the people of the aboriginal race, not only on financial grounds, but because the view is held rightly or wrongly that the Federal Government is in a position to do the job more efficiently than the States are now doing it.

Possibly as a result of these representations it was agreed the States should be asked to transfer to the Commonwealth Parliament powers to make laws in relation to Post War reconstruction (inter alia) for the people of the aboriginal race – for a period of five years from the end of the war.

By a Federal Referendum held on the 19th August, 1944, the people of Australia rejected these proposals. They were unfortunately bracketed with a number of others, which proved unacceptable and had perforce to meet a like fate.

It took forty-three years under Federal rule to reach this stage, and the claims of the native people have certainly not depreciated in that time. But why five years only - a period possibly about long enough to re-organise existing methods and begin to establish right ones? Most of us will, I think, agree with Mr. D. Maughan, K.C., who said in Sydney recently that such a law which was only to remain in operation for five years would seem to be futile.

We now have Native Affairs Departments in two States, and in the Northern Territory with a like organization at Canberra, each having a Chief Administrative Officer in Charge ; we have Protection Boards with their administrative staffs in three other States. Then we have no less than six separate principal Acts of Parliament, and a host of regulations, directly controlling the affairs of the native people. These Acts and the policies upon which they are based differ somewhat though running on similar lines. All this to guide the destinies of some seventy-four thousand people, about one third of whom are not under restraint of any kind, and only twenty-thousand in camps and institutions, while some sixteen thousand are workers. Surely it would be possible to frame one comprehensive measure ensuring the protection - because that is what these laws are for - of all the native people, the administration of which by one

competent Authority should result in permanent and unified results, consistent throughout in a manner not possible under the existent diverse system.

Much more money is of course needed, and a Commonwealth-wide organization would be in a better position to assess requirements and supply this and ensure its distribution in a more equitable manner than is possible under the present position. Why should, for instance, the few natives in Victoria, have so much more spent per head upon them than the natives of the West or the Northern Territory when all are probably equally deserving?

Native policy has changed its colour like the chameleon too often, and this is particularly so in the Federal Government's own territory where finally war intervened to bring about yet another changes. Minister after Minister has presented a brand new policy, but few of them have remained in office long enough to implement it, and I am not suggesting that the present type of Federal control in the Northern Territory, which has many good points, is a pattern upon which to base a new policy for the whole of Australia, largely because conditions to which it now applies are not found elsewhere. While there is good in all the systems of the different States and Commonwealth, there seems to be no one markedly superior to the other

which might be accepted as a basis to work upon, and where policies are not full attuned to the modern idea of assimilation, particularly of the coloured people, with the exception of that of Western Australia and now New South Wales. A pooling of the best in each might produce a satisfactory basis on which to work, and this implemented by a comprehensive Act of the Federal Parliament would at all events give us a start in the right direction.

In what I have said I imply no reflection upon Government Officers who have done their best with little encouragement, less money and small consideration for the changes they knew to be necessary but were powerless to bring about.

The State which has the largest number of natives to care for has almost invariably relegated this charge to a junior or honorary Minister, whose voice in Cabinet has seemingly not carried sufficient weight to do justice to the task, though there have been some notable exceptions especially in the past decade. Yet we find that in New Zealand and South Africa the matter is considered of sufficient importance to be under the direct charge of the Prime Minister, and in Canada a senior Minister. In States where Boards have controlled matters, the claims of the natives until fairly recently received but indifferent consideration.

Not very many years ago a senior Minister of

the Federal Government stated that "Whatever organization was suited to deal with the native race the political organization was the very last one to deal with them."

If by that he meant the removal of the administration of Native Affairs from the realm of party politics, then we must heartily agree with the former Honourable Minister, because if there is one subject above all others which deserves the uninterrupted flow of good administration untrammelled by any taint of political flavour or interference, it is this problem of the people of the aboriginal race.

It is of course Parliament's duty to shape policies and make laws implementing them, but beyond that in this case their administration should be left to those appointed to carry out Parliament's wishes unhampered in any way.

Ministers and Members, possibly often against their will, are apt to be swayed by consideration of the interests of their white constituents where they may be opposed to those of the natives. We find now and again that political influence is brought to bear to prevent justice being done from the native point of view, or some matter upheld against Authority. Too often has some white offender against the interests of the natives escaped the charge, or having been convicted in a Court of Law, had his punishment lifted or lessened, by an

appeal to the Member for his district or some friendly Minister. Such interference in the course of justice, besides having an adverse effect upon the native mind, has far-reaching effects and stultifies the process of administration. There are many ways in which this interference operates, but no one incident of the kind should be allowed to occur as being an "isolated case" because there have been in the past altogether too many such instances, which of course is in keeping with the attitude most whites generally adopt towards the matter. For there to be good administration there must be freedom from the possibility of anything of that kind.

It seems to me best that our chief administrative official, whatever his title, should be responsible to Parliament alone, and removable only by a vote of Parliament. It would be his job to carry out the accepted policy, and he should be left entirely free to do so without political interference or influence of any kind. We might seek for some time for the right man, but eventually he could and should be found. He would of course have his State Deputies, and under them again District Officers, all working on the same lines under his direction, and all quite unaffected by local influences which often exercise as strong a pull. There are good Officials in all States who could be drawn upon to fill some of these positions.

When a Federal plan of control is under consideration it is to be sincerely hoped that no attempt will be made to place the direction of affairs in charge of an Administration Board. However efficient Boards may be, you will get much more life, enthusiasm and work from an individual in executive charge not beset by divergent views and interests, and moreover you will get speedier results. Our past experience of Boards has not been such as to instil any confidence in such a system, and while the existing Boards are probably a considerable improvement upon their predecessors it is a clumsy method of performing a service which apparently, outside Australia, is considered obsolete. A purely advisory board might prove useful.

Parliamentarians still talk vaguely about what ought to be done for the native people, but surely the time for talking is past and action is needed to take its place. There must be a continuity of policy undisturbed by political upheavals, and decisions arrived at should be given effect to, promptly. Too often hitherto great things have been promised which have all ended in smoke. Interest has waxed and waned, and only those who hold or have held administrative positions know how desperately difficult it has been to make any real progress. All that kind of thing should cease under one concerted plan fearlessly executed.

A new type of Official is required, one who

thinks of the native not merely as a native but as a man ; one who thinks on a higher plane, fearless in the execution of his duty. Officials entrusted with the destinies of other human beings cannot be too carefully selected.

From earliest days, fear of the police has ever exercised a sinister influence over a naturally peaceful people who could never understand how a man could punish and protect simultaneously. The system which requires the use of the police as protectors of natives is one which should be abandoned in any new scheme of control. One would think the police themselves might be glad to get away from a system which too often places them in an invidious position. For my part, with few exceptions, I have nothing but admiration for the way in which the police I have known, executed their duty roll. Often they scarcely knew how to act, but they were first of all police, bound by loyalty to their oath and superior officers, and their work as protectors of natives was of secondary importance. Natives have long memories, and they do not forget those who as a class have wronged them as some police have done in years gone by. We made the first mistake when in the very early years we appointed men as guardians with power to protect and punish indiscriminately, and the natives often witnessed the spectacle of one who they thought their protector

leading a band of police against them and shooting them up.

The first Officer to be so appointed in Western Australia was a certain Captain Ellis, who ironically enough lost his life in a pitched battle with natives in 1934, when some thirty natives, including women also lost their lives. *Foxcroft refers to a similar position in Victoria in the early days.

The duty of issuing rations, clothing and medicines to the needy natives has been hitherto, to a large extent, in the hands of the police, and has given them a lever with which to impose their wishes. They have, too, had the unlimited use of natives as trackers, horse boys, house servants, gardeners, wood gatherers, and so on. The disadvantage of a system which places a weak people completely at the mercy of others entitled to dominate it at will are well known by those acquainted with its working, its cheapness being its only recommendation, and I am convinced that this largely accounts for the bad name Australia has acquired in relation to its duty towards its native people.

The police held the lives of the natives in their hands to make or mar. Mostly holding views of those whites scattered throughout the country's vast interior – indeed often drawn from the country itself – it would be surprising should they not

*Australian Native Policy, "Its History, especially in Victoria." E.J.B. Foxcroft, M.A.

share the common outlook which bids them conform with and safeguard the alleged rights of native employers and others in their dealings with the natives. The police have often had hard and dangerous jobs to do, and this outlook could hardly be held against them when trying to do their duty in the face of prevailing public opinion. But being mostly good and honest men, it is the few exceptions who have abused their powers, that have thrown strong light upon the whole sorry business. After all, this is a natural convergence of the system which has hitherto looked on the native as something less than human.

How must a man feel who has to pretend to protect one he is bound to regard as a delinquent and who doesn't know the meaning of the laws he is said to have broken? How utterly farcical some of those native trials used to be, how Gilbertian the situation – the trembling accused, the dusky witnesses for the Crown – yet always a strange absence of like witnesses for the defence, “natives all” why bother to bring these in when you were certain of or desired to secure a conviction? All equally scared, not only of officialdom, but of the disregard of tribal affinities, producing strange cross currents too deep and involved for the uninitiated white. Then there would be the prosecuting police officer possibly identical with the arresting official, the “Protecting” senior police officer

who nevertheless had instructed his junior official to proceed in the matter of the arrest and trial, and taking the statements incriminating the accused. The whole thing was biased from the beginning, and but for kindly Magistrates well acquainted with the whole procedure, things might have gone much more hardly for the natives than they did. There were, too, individual groups which watched cases and caused justice to be done. Thank God that in the West, at all events, we have got away from that kind of thing, and where native offenses against native our Native Courts ensure complete fair play, and our inspectors see to it that the accused shall not convict himself out of his own mouth. It is now provided that in charges against natives, even where whites are concerned, no prior statement can be taken from a native likely to prejudice his trial, nor can tribal wife be compelled to witness against her husband.

Police duty must necessarily bring about many contacts with natives, but for the rest let us employ a different set of officers altogether, guarding impartially the interests of the native people.

I see that a former Under-Secretary of State for Air in England, recently stated after a visit to Nigeria, where there are some millions of natives, that the Resident administered his territory with the help of some twenty white men. He

had not a single armed policeman within the whole Territory. Again, referring to the Gold Coast, he stated that there was a smaller Police Force to keep law and order than was thought necessary to guard one single white man's camp and airdrome. He told an amusing story of the method used to bring to book a native chief who was sheltering two natives wanted on a criminal charge, and who had built a defensive stockade round his village. A bulldozer was brought along to begin the campaign against the village with a Royal Air Force Beaufighter as an escort. The bulldozer went into action firing coloured Verey light cartridges, resistance collapsed, the enemy surrendered, and the wanted men were arrested. Compare this with the surrounding of a native camp in the early dawn by armed police and their coloured assistants, and the firing of rifles towards just-awakened natives fleeing in all directions, this being designed to secure the wanted man dead or alive – a practice which I fear has far too often prevailed in the past.

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INSPECTION : Our proposed new control should surely envisage a fresh and inspired system of inspection. I am quite convinced that there has never been throughout Australia enough inspection, not only of native institutions of all kinds, but of places where native people are employed, or camping or residing. It seems to

me so important a feature of the whole business that I refer to in under the heading of Federal control, because should the Federal Government ultimately be granted the powers recently sought in respect to the people of the aborigines it should be in a position to put into effect a system of inspection which has not hitherto existed throughout, though it has been done in so far as has been possible in certain States. Now, by inspection, I do not mean the stereo-typed police patrol, good no doubt in many respects and necessary, but far from meeting the case. Neither do I here refer to medical inspection which I have mentioned under Health. The inspection I visualise must be made by welfare workers, call them what you will, both male and female, who are acting solely in the natives' interests with, of course, due regard to fair play in their relations with the whites. They must go the rounds continually so that the native people will get to know them personally, lose fear of their approach and give them their confidence. Inspection is a lifeline which the natives can grasp more readily than in any other way, the means of securing attention to their individual needs. Once one gains their confidence, with a little encouragement they will approach and relate their troubles, which I know by experience weigh heavily upon them, though at times they may be exaggerated.

Generally the natives do not rail about their

wrongs. They may sometimes rebel at decisions, and should they approach one who is in sympathy with them with their hearts full of bitterness, after a talk they will go away at least reconciled to the justice of the outcome. My method was to give them plenty of time to think over things ; often weeks or months would elapse before an answer to a question of mine might be forthcoming. In one instance it was two years before I could gain the confidence of one I knew had something heavily upon her mind. Cunning or naivete is not a characteristic of our coloured folk. They will not lie in the face of one they trust, though they may be evasive or refuse to talk. It is so often what they do not tell you that really matters, and you have to try and read their minds. Their thought processes must necessarily be in English where their own tongue is forgotten, and as their English is restricted, their thinking lacks cohesion, is slow, and often leads to incorrect assumptions. Their speech is not unlike basic English, which I should imagine could be usefully acquired by them. Your inspector must not exhibit favouritism or spoil any particular individual. The work of camp inspection should be done in sight of all. If approach to a woman is necessary, she should not be spoken to in her hut unless she is sick, and then one of her own people should be present.

the open before all present, but out of earshot and far enough away to obviate the others reading the expression passing over the features, or lip reading. If it is a man who is to be approached, walk a little apart and lend your full interest to what he says. He must not be rushed, he is not a quick thinker, and you on your part must seek to find out what he really wants, which is often very difficult. Your inspector should not also be a policeman. If there is police work to be done, let the police do it. I used to make this a rule in my Department, and while on missions, stations and settlements certain regulations are necessary governing discipline, the police should always be called in where it is a matter serious enough to warrant their intervention. This is on the principle that those who protect cannot at the same time punish, though they may be required to make charges in some cases, but if possible they should not even do this. A competent inspector upon entering a camp or other place where natives are assembled will soon learn to sense where trouble lies. It may be a family difference, some delinquency indicated by a tendency to be secretive and avoid conversation, the avoidance of the natives by one of their number, even the hangdog look of another – all are indications which an experienced observer learns to read. It is far better to get quarrelsome people together and wash things up there and then than

that simmering disputes should lead to disagreement and crime.

In the course of time the people will look for the advent of the inspector and will save up their troubles for his next visit.

Even where the natives are in employment they should never be left without this moral backing. They will be better workers if they have the opportunity of occasionally discussing wrongs or fancied wrongs, and when confidence is imposed in a good official they will follow his instructions implicitly, or at all events to the best of their ability.

I recall one Superintendent I had who was able to impose his will without force, although the facilities for detention were on the premises. I have known him to draw a circle on the ground, place a delinquent within it, with the instructions to stop there until released, and strange to say his will prevailed.

For myself, I made it a practice at the settlements to give the inmates an opportunity of interviewing me individually if they wished it every time I paid a visit, usually once a month. Sometimes with the Superintendent to assist as a secretary to take notes, but alone in very private matters, I used to listen to secrets of family life full of interest to them, though often trivial in the extreme. A little talk together very often resulted in bringing peace of mind and the removal of

some difficulty which perhaps was only a fancied one. To all official or semi-official institutions and missions the same thing applies. A trained man will pick up things that are wrong even more quickly than a permanent Officer-in charge, and many troubles which sometimes led to serious happenings could have been avoided had this system been universally adopted.

A large army of inspectors is not necessary. One man constantly travelling can cover a very big district. In the West, for instance, the largest State in the Commonwealth, we anticipated doing this work with not more than four permanent inspectors throughout, and where the employment of women was concerned, female officials were sent to investigate where possible.

As to the Head himself, it became very clear to me that to run his Department successfully, this Official must be prepared to be constantly on the move seeking to get into touch with every outpost under his control. You cannot run such a business entirely from your office chair.

As a friend of mine wrote me recently, the native people are such a combination of joy and sorrow, laughter and tears all mixed together. But there is a large element of despair as well, and more and more as they come in contact with us do they need understanding people to lean upon until such time as they learn to stand alone.

Fear inherited from their forbears still plays a big part in their make-up. I knew a woman who constantly complained of the cruelty of her husband, and undoubtedly this was true, yet when he was taken to Court for ill-treating her, she swore that he was good to her. Fear still predominated, fear of a wife of her husband, fear of each other, fear of the unknown.

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SOCIAL BENEFITS : The Federal Parliament has, in its wisdom, already decreed that some natives shall be entitled to participate in the benefits provided under the Invalid and Old Age Pensions, Maternity Allowances and Child Endowment Acts, and it is only to be expected by the native people in the extension to them of these social services of the Commonwealth, but some of this money is being unwisely spent – Child Endowment for instance – so much so that its distribution has unfortunately to be directed through Official State channels. The relief afforded the States is saving rationing costs, no doubt enables the expenditure on money in other beneficial directions, and though the increasing cost of living naturally lessens the benefit somewhat, in the case of the larger coloured families, the financial position is better than ever before. But we must see that idleness is not an outcome of this generally improved condition.

The native as he lives at present, can live on less than a white. He mostly has no rent to pay and all the money in the world doesn't get him a house, but what he does get may result in his declining to work while he has enough for his and his family's small needs. It might have been better for a few years to come to have spent the money provided by the Commonwealth Government on schools, hospitals and technical training, but it is imperative to ensure that a higher family income does not result in continued deterioration, as it has done in many cases where social inferiority still predominates.

With regard to pensions which are granted in the case of those endeavouring to live approximately in accordance with our accepted standards, many anomalies have already arisen. Pensioners known to me are living in camps on reserves, who, it seems to me, are no more entitled to draw pensions by reason of old age and infirmity, than are others living in the same way on the same or other reserves, and not so benefiting. This has been the cause of great dissatisfaction, and the same may be said of women drawing the maternity bonus living alongside others refused the concession. I once took a pensioner into an institution because she was too feeble to care for herself and there was none of her own people to look after her. Her pension ceased when she entered the

institution, and my protests against this proved futile. Admittedly the Federal Officials are now placed in an invidious position in deciding who ought to be the recipients of these favours, but if it is right it should extend equally to all, and moreover it should be ensured that it is devoted under safeguards to the purpose for which it is intended. I wonder what would happen if all aborigines decided to give up living as such in order to secure benefits!

Far be it for me to deny a native any monetary benefits whatever, but it does seem to me that if we make all necessary provision for the native people for many years to come, the change over to the enjoyment of pensions and other allowances might be on a graduated plan and first applied to those who, through our efforts and their own, become completely emancipated, and take their place in the community accordingly. The promise of the bestowal of these benefits should prove an inducement towards the acquisition of a full measure of citizenship. I repeat what I have said before, that the mere giving of money to these people is not going to solve their difficulties, so long as we do not admit them to the enjoyment of all other things which we ourselves enjoy.

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RESERVES AND LANDS : The acquisition of lands for native purposes by the Federal Government should Native Affairs be placed under Federal control throughout, should present no difficulties. Numerous reserves, sites for missions, settlements, native stations and depots are already devoted to the needs of natives, and from these little revenue is derived by the States by way of rent, neither are rates payable in respect to them. Surely it should be an easy matter to transfer such land to the Commonwealth for a similar purpose, to be eventually restored to the States as our scheme of evolution develops and they are not any longer needed for the purpose for which they were originally reserved. Those expressing a contrary view to this are surely wilfully raising an unnecessary bogey. In proximity to almost every small town in the country there are suburban lots more or less unoccupied, some of which the Commonwealth might purchase outright or lease as sites for homes for native families considered sufficiently emancipated to merge into the community on equal terms, but not to be so employed for those continuing to live after the manner of the present-day natives, because that again would defeat our ends. Moreover, the occupation of these lots by natives should be contingent upon the good behaviour of the occupants and their continuing to live as whites in every way, obeying

laws, Council or Shire hygiene rules like anyone else. The Federal Department would retain the power to eject unsuitable tenants or remove them to some settlement if after investigation it was found that the conditions were not being completely fulfilled.

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A VOICE IN HIS OWN AFFAIRS : It can be assumed that under Federal control there would be undertaken the reformation of some existing utterly unsuitable so-called institutions, where death and desolation stalk amongst the inmates and happiness has ceased to exist. In this work the natives themselves in due course should be encouraged to assist by taking part in the oversight and departmental management. They should at least possess their own trained nurses, teachers and helpers, gradually taking the place of similar white staff. This would be another inducement to the natives to make progress.

The native should have a voice in his own affairs. This has already been tried in small ways with some success, particularly in Queensland. In New South Wales the "Aborigines Welfare Board" has recently included native appointees. In larger institutions small advisory councils working in co-operation with management ought to be of considerable assistance.

I believe, too, the time has come when the native should have Parliamentary representation. Assuming that Federal control throughout becomes assured, the natives might be privileged to elect a member of the House of Representatives. Since, however, there would be many difficulties in the way of doing this at present, and time is required to evolve the process, it is suggested that the Federal Government should elect some suitable white person to represent the native people in Parliament for a period of ten years, from the day of the Commonwealth Government assuming control of Native Affairs. Such a Representative should have free and ample travel facilities, enabling him to visit any part of his vast Australia-wide constituency in his constituents interests.

The Maoris of New Zealand, who number some ninety thousand, as compared with seventy-four thousand aborigines in Australia, are entitled to elect four Maori representatives in the New Zealand Parliament. There are no electoral rolls for Maori electorates, but the voter, on entering a polling booth, applies in writing for the ballot paper, which is given upon the applicant answering certain questions. Surely something of that kind could be done treating the whole of Australia as one electorate. Maori elections are usually held the day before the European elections, and it should be easy enough to enable voting perhaps

on a simple majority basis to take place on a given date with the aid of existing machinery, permitting any authorised police or other Government Officer to act as returning officers for the occasion. The selection of a native candidate for Parliament in about ten years' time should present few difficulties, indeed there should be more than one candidate in the field by then. However, if no one of the people of the aborigines came forward, power should lie with the Federal Government to select a suitable native to represent his people in Parliament.

It will be said that our natives do not equal the Maoris, either in intelligence or cultural advancement, and while the latter is true, it is no doubt partly due to the repressive nature of our dealings with them. As to intelligence, had our natives received the same encouragement and assistance to progress as have the Maoris, I think they would have shown equal sagacity in making it. It has become recognised only during the last twenty-five years or so that our native people are not the hopelessly inferior, brainless creatures, they were previously credited with being.

Should the transfer of control to the Commonwealth not be accomplished, then I see no reason why a similar system of Parliamentary representation should not be arranged in those States where there are not less than ten thousand people of the

aboriginal race. It may be added that the special type of Parliamentary representation here suggested could be abolished when assimilation became an accomplished fact.

Now and again the affairs of our native people are mentioned in our various Parliaments, and estimates of expenditure upon native affairs are considered and accepted, questions are asked and briefly answered, appalling ignorance of the subject is exhibited by Members – even Ministers discuss the matter with small knowledge of it – yet during all the years of responsible Government no native voice has been raised in these Assemblies to put right in any detail, or really state the case for its people. Many an official could and would gladly have done so, but officials have no voice in our Parliamentary system, and besides, their presentation of the case might have been realistic enough to cause uneasiness if not resentment!

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FINANCE : Naturally in the furtherance of these proposals the matter of providing for the cost is of the greatest importance. Assuming that control is transferred to the Commonwealth, the States no doubt will expect considerable financial assistance in the work of caring for the natives if deputed to carry on with it, and that existing services will be employed to that end. But the

agency which provides the money is surely likely its desire, and it is indeed entitled to undertake the supervision of its expenditure in accordance with its accepted policy. Any other course would simply result in a continuance of the existing diversity in the conduct of affairs, and except perhaps in a physical sense the native might be little further advanced. Uniformity in his social advancement must be preserved at all costs. However that way be, a great deal more will be required in this direction than in the past.

Hitherto the measures of responsibility felt by the Australian people towards the natives throughout has been assessed in the respective States and the Northern Territory at the expenditure of so much per head of the natives – resulting in an invidious comparison. Western Australia, for example, geographically the largest State, having the biggest native and smallest white population of any mainland State, spends less on its natives on a per capita basis of the native people than any other State. According to this assessment, Western Australia appears to do but scant justice to its native people on whom it spends something under two pounds per head as compared with seven pounds per head so spent in New South Wales. Victoria spends even more – nearly ten pounds per head, though expenditure is devoted to only a moiety of its native people said to require its aid.

But it is not so bad as it looks, for Western Australia contains some thousands of self-supporting bush natives and a large number of workers upon whom it is required to spend very little, so that the per capita cost of caring for those who do get help is really much greater than appears at first sight. Considering these factors, Western Australia actually does not lag far behind Queensland at about four pounds, and South Australia something over six pounds. But surely it is merely a provision of nature, or might we say Western Australia's bad luck, that it should have remaining within its borders so large a number of the people of the aboriginal race upon whom any expenditure at all is necessary?

When at the Canberra Conference, the question of Government financial assistance to the States for native purposes was under discussion, the burden borne by the people of the lesser populated States on this account as compared with those more densely peopled was the theme of the debate. It was pointed out that in States where all available money is required for developmental work, difficulty is experienced in financing native requirements, no matter how sympathetic the Governments might be towards them. Moreover, was contended, rightly I think, that whatever expenditure is necessary in the interests of the native people should be a charge against Australia as a

whole. It would indeed be infinitely fairer to assess what it costs each one of us in doing his duty towards the natives throughout, and on this basis Western Australia easily tops the list. Every white person in Western Australia pays annually approximately two shillings per head towards the support of the natives, and the only other State to approach this is Queensland, which contributes something less than one shilling and six pence. Next comes South Australia with about a shilling, then New South Wales, six pence, while Victoria is a bad last at less than a penny. In the Northern Territory where there are so few whites and the cost is already chargeable to the whole of the Australian people, I think it works out about two pounds per head. Now assuming the population of Australia to number seven million and seventy thousand, and basing expenditure on the Western Australian figure of two shillings per head of the white people, the total assessed contribution from Australia generally should amount to a little over seven hundred thousand pounds, instead of the present expenditure of under two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. This would mean an expenditure rate of nearly ten pounds per head of our native people on all counts, yet we spend more than fourteen pounds per head for education alone of our children, exclusive of the cost of buildings. It can be said therefore that

if the people of the Commonwealth as a whole only do as much for the natives throughout as do the people of Western Australia, then on this basis alone considerable advancement should be possible, but even then we should not do enough, because in the early stages a great deal of capital expenditure will be required.

Though for some years expenditure on a like or even larger scale may be necessary, in time as our plan of assimilation progresses there should be a gradual diminution in cost until vanishing point is almost reached. Moreover, when our native people throughout are paid wages commensurate with their work and attainments which should be considerably enhanced under the new scheme, and assured of employment, the majority of them will be self-supporting.

In the absence of Federal control, unless the States are prepared to spend a very great deal more in the care of their native people than at present, even though there has been some improvement since the Canberra Conference, progress will be retarded as heretofore, and the outlook remain little better than it is now. But even now while it appears principally to be a question of money, it is equally one of teaching our coloured people how to live, and if we do that successfully they will themselves relieve us of further costs in the long run.

LEGISLATION : The laws which govern our native affairs are intended to make provision for a displaced people and ensure beneficent protection for them against their fellow men – those by whom they have been dispossessed.

From the very earliest days when inspired proclamations were issued in the hope of regulating the relations between black and white, none of the laws were instrumental in completely protecting the black against oppression, either because they were never fully enforced or because there were too many glaring loopholes in them – though they seem to have provided for his punishment in wrong-doing to an extent not in evidence to-day. From time to time we have tried to catch up with the position by passing new laws, but have sometimes succeeded in shutting the stable door after the horse has escaped. Nevertheless, in doing at last what should have been done long ago, we may be nearer the ideal to-day than ever before.

But it has been like moving mountains to get the native laws amended at all. Instead of prompt revision being undertaken when occasion required it, every conceivable pretext and excuse has been made to prevent amendment until only the threat of scandal or charges of neglect have forced decisions. Legislatures dislike taking up native matters at any time, and whether resulting from a guilty feeling, the possibility of setting in motion

acrimonious debates, or as affecting vested interests, particularly of land-holding sections, the reluctance on the part of Government to introduce new measures has been apparent.

It may be argued that one good periodical revision is better than various tinkering at shorter intervals, and at least in the former case those responsible for the text of the revisions have the advantage of acquiring time to think about them, even to revisiting their own ideas on current phases of the matter!

It will be a happy day for the native when these special laws are no longer required, and he can enjoy the same legal rights as the rest of the community – or rather be no longer denied them. Admittedly laws covering human relationships are difficult to frame, and when the people concerned are of quasi-differing races, the task is rendered still harder.

The disregard, or maybe just the forgetfulness of legislators of the fact of the presence of numerous natives in the community leads to some queer contretemps now and again. For instance, in the West a new Firearms Act was passed some few years ago. One of the immediate effects of this Act, as soon as it was assented to, was to enable all the numerous aboriginals throughout the North of Western Australia to possess firearms, whereas previously under native law there was

provision forbidding this except under permit. The new Act cancelling this provision was introduced without reference to the Native Department, and its effect was not only somewhat ludicrous, but might have had dangerous results had the natives known enough to take advantage of the position, which of course was put right as soon as possible. Something of the same sort happened when a new bill regulating the issue of dog licences was under consideration. I only discovered the terms of the Bill when it was under discussion before the House, and hastily called the attention of the Minister responsible, to the fact that the natives, who possessed many dogs, had been over-looked. The effect of the Bill, had it become law as it stood, would have been to entirely deprive the natives of their canine companions. Fortunately I was in time to prevent this.

Another Legislative provision, in the Workers' Compensation Act, omitted any reference to the native who in consequence became a worker within the meaning of the Act, and therefore entitled to full compensation rights under it. This produced consternation amongst the insurance community, not to mention Members of Government concerned, and it fell to my lot to think out a way to overcome the impasse. This was effectively accomplished, but not before I was compelled to take an employer to court to prove that the

native had equal rights with the white in the matter of compensation for injury. I won my case but we compromised upon the issue since the native concerned was a bush black with few material requirements.

The State having become more than ever the guardian of the native people should do its duty by them – no longer regarding them as objects of charity, but as having rights and privileges equal to the majority. Laws are needed to achieve this end, and since the issue of the report of the Canberra Conference most of the States have remodelled their Native Acts, following the lead of Western Australia in adopting many of the new provisions to be found in its Native Administration Act of 1936. This was naturally pleasing to those of us who had fought the cause of the natives for years, and I have been told many times since that Act became law that we builded better than we knew.

This Act, the adoption of which immediately preceded the Canberra Conference of 1937, modernised the law in relation to our contacts with the natives and emphasised the dereliction of our duty towards them. The Native laws of Western Australia had not been amended since 1911, and then only in certain small respects, nor since 1905 in the main.

Critical writers sometimes refer scathingly to

legislation as it applies particularly to the care and protection of the natives – they dwell too upon its alleged repressive tendencies.

This originates from two main causes. First, a lack of practical experience of native administration or first-hand knowledge of the natives themselves, and secondly, a misconception of the law itself – indeed sometimes a completely reversed view of its intentions.

It can be assumed that the framers of existing laws are those who through years of first-hand experience have felt the lack of legislative assistance in very many directions, and only those who have daily to administer such laws come to recognise weaknesses, by their experience in Courts, in the field, and in the daily contacts with white and black which their work brings about.

While present-day legislation may have tightened up certain provisions covering deliberate delinquency in the native, it has become much more severe in its application to the white man in his relations with him. Our own mistakes in the past account for this added severity in the law to-day. Had our forbears really protected the native the need for many of the existing provisions might now be lacking. There are many sections in our Native laws which place restrictions upon persons doing so and so – such persons being of course other than natives, yet the provisions possibly

could be construed to include them unless it was expressly stated otherwise. Now whereas Authority knows these sections are not meant to apply to natives the casual observer sees them a menace which was never intended by the framers of law. It doesn't seem to occur to our critic that there may ever be bad natives!

Factors made apparent by the inequity of our own law as applied to natives, such as property rights – trusteeship – recognition of tribal marriage in relation to inheritance, a truly complicated business – native Courts – guardianship and so on – have rendered necessary provisions not covered by other measures and never previously provided for because these factors in relation to natives were formally non-existent or not recognised.

CITIZENSHIP : As our Native laws are still deficient and lacking in uniformity throughout Australia, legal anomalies necessarily exist, and to some of these I will refer, because they are in consonance with what I have written elsewhere. Take for instance the matter of exemption. This is intended to grant a native full citizenship rights, and every State and the Northern Territory has a clause in its legislation to that end. Unfortunately there are some other laws which prevent full effect being given to that intention.

It is said that the law is an ass, but while not

necessarily agreeing with that, I think it is patent that its cross currents occasionally lead to some curious positions. I once had reason to take proceedings against an exempted native for some serious breach of the Native Administration Act, treating him of course as a white. I lost my case because the man claimed he was still a native and the Magistrate supporting this claim, ruled that as that was so, he had not committed any breach of his own protective law, and therefore had committed no offence. Having tried to make him legally a white man, the only course then open was to cancel his exemption and let him remain a native in law as well as in fact. White men marry natives, and one would think that their wives would automatically be elevated to their plane and enjoy like privileges with their husbands. Not so, however ; for if the woman has not been exempted and the man supplies her for instance with a glass of beer, both commit offences against Native law, he for supplying the liquor and she for receiving it. Not long ago a white man in Perth was awarded three months' imprisonment for doing this. Perhaps the prosecution in that case was justified because of the habitual drunkenness of the woman, but the case certainly raised some fine points.

In some States there is already displayed a too hasty disposition to grant exemption. This follows an appeal to sentiment rather than to reason,

Perhaps leading to serious repercussions later because, if used unwisely, it will retard assimilation. I have pointed out that our whole plan is a gradual one, and this is definitely one of the directions in which we can go too fast. The persons thus exempted will be the first to suffer and suffer badly. It will debar them from the benefits which the Native Administration Acts provide without compensating advantages from the other side. There is a tendency, too, to arrange a sort of wholesale exemption of natives said to be approaching white living standards. This is possibly more dangerous still because it is liable to perpetuate just those conditions from which we are trying to free our native people. If these exempted persons are in every way fitted to live on the same plane as the average Australian, well and good ; if they are not they will beat it back to their old haunts and revert to what they were before – aboriginal in thought and in manner of living, and their children will follow them into this undesirable retreat. Exemption embracing full rights of citizenship should be only granted in the case of those completely emancipated – to those who live in all respects as we do and are socially acceptable, or at least living on an equal plane beside us. The danger of exempting natives not ready for it was particularly emphasised at the Canberra Conference.

Curiously enough some few exempted natives

dislike having to possess exemption certificates, that is documents indicating that they are exempt from the provisions of the Native Acts. They feel that the production of such a document upon demand belittles them and affects their pride, and so they decline exemption and prefer to fight the police and any other Authority in the doing of forbidden acts. They claim that if a person is fit to be exempted he should not need to produce a document to prove it, but unfortunately the fact of his not holding a certificate nullifies this objective, because a white man is obliged to treat him as under Native law until he can prove that he is not. If the boot could be on the other foot, that is, certificates be held by all those who should come under Native Law, those worthy of exemption needing none, it would be a happy position for the latter. But the number now exempted and worthy of it is still so small that it is impracticable to adopt this suggestion, and it can be seen clearly that to do so might also lead to a sort of "black marketing" of an undesirable type, and to confusion unbounded. The issue of these certificates is unfortunately necessary until the day comes when the position can be reversed without danger, through the great majority being exempted because fully worthy of it, and the minority only subject to separate protective legislation. Of course native brought up under my plan would

be granted citizen rights upon completion of their training, and I think that those who joined the forces to fight for their country, as many did, should be similarly treated.

WHAT'S IN A NAME : It seems to me that the time has come when we must cease calling people who are nearly as white as ourselves, "aboriginals." In the States in which there are few full-blooded aborigines remaining, as in New South Wales, where there are over ten thousand coloureds and under seven hundred full-bloods, the less than full-bloods are still termed aborigines even when near whites. The same applies to Victoria with under one hundred full-bloods, and also in South Australia where full-bloods and the coloureds are nearly divided. Western Australia which has considerably more full-bloods than coloureds, is the only State which legally describes the people of aboriginal race as "natives", and compels quadroons or near-whites to be classed and treated as whites. But the West is looking forward and not backward, in its policy. We are urged to call the inhabitants of India, Indians, not natives, yet they are natives of India just as our people are natives of Australia, though you would not like them called Australian – we have reserved that

appellation for our own immigrant race. The people who have the best right to the term have been here since the dawn of time, speaking in human terms. Any reference to the aboriginal race as Australians at all may be resented – well, the recently unearthed Keilor skull, now in the Melbourne Museum, is said to be that of an Australian, who lived here some one hundred and forty thousand years ago! Anyway, if we cannot initially term our coloured people Australians, let us try and convert them into such, and no longer refer to them as prehistoric men to be classed with fossils found in our geological strata. It has taken the coloured people a mere fraction of the time it took us, to emerge from the equivalent of the stone age to present day civilization, and that being so surely demonstrates their ability to readily acquire our existing way of life.

To be called an aboriginal is repugnant to most coloured folk who prefer to be known as the people of the soil – the native people. The half-caste is abhorrent to the true aboriginal who calls him a “yellow-fellow”, and whose women paint their half-blood babies, when they have them, black. But the word native has no derogatory implications whatever, it suits all and is literally correct.

At the Canberra Conference it was agreed that in any uniform legislation adopted by any other

State or Commonwealth, the definition of native contained in the Western Australian Act of 1936 should be adopted. With the important exception of the name to some extent that has been attempted, but figuratively speaking one could drive a coach and horses through the loop holes which exist in the various Acts, and all of them ignore the superior claims of the near-white to be disregarded as an aboriginal, excepting of course Western Australia, whose Act was taken as the model. Since most of us are convinced that the full-blood aboriginal will not be with us very much longer, it is surely a fitting time to grant the people of aboriginal descent the right to be termed natives of Australia instead of aborigines, which, by virtue of their intermingling with us they can no longer claim to be. Of course, the exemption of persons from the provisions of the various native laws is relied upon to place the better class of cultured aboriginal or coloured person beyond implied reproach of being regarded as a native, but the mere holding of a ticket proclaiming the fact does not get over this hurdle, he is still an exempted native. It is a pity I think, for the sake of our coloured friends especially, that the Western Australian definition has not been adhered to throughout. The question is of importance too when marriages between coloureds and whites are under consideration. One can imagine

a white man objecting to his coloured wife being referred to as an aboriginal rather than the more euphemistic term "native", but even such comparatively minor points as this deserve our sympathetic consideration.

THE FRANCHISE : There is no uniformity throughout Australia in the exercise of the franchise by the native people. The Commonwealth Electoral Act debars an aboriginal from voting at Federal Elections. But what is an aboriginal in this case – one who is really one or one who is only legally one under State law. One presumes that any person who is less than a full-blood may enjoy the privilege of voting at Federal Elections, but it seems trifle ambiguous. In Western Australia natives do not vote for the State Parliament though it is assumed that an exempt native should be able to do so. This is one of the reasons why exemption is sometimes sought, or should I say encouraged, because it is thought that the recipient will thereafter possess a vote possibly to be cast in favour of one who claims exemption for him. However, there is a clause in the State Electoral Act which forbids a half-caste having his name on the Electoral roll, though I know that some coloured folk occasionally manage it. In Queensland natives do not enjoy the franchise in respect to State Elections, though an exempted person

may do so. On the contrary in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia the privilege is granted to all natives, legally known in these States as Aboriginals.

If natives in some States are considered sufficiently sophisticated to enjoy the franchise, why not grant the privilege to all? It should make very little difference in the long run because the native people are so scattered, but domiciliary difficulties due to nomadism, or the pursuit of congenial employment must arise. It has been argued, I know, that where there might be "block" votes so to speak, owing to the presence of a large settlement in a particular electorate, some candidate might be thought to have an unfair advantage over the others, but since all aspirants for Parliamentary honours would be eligible to visit the same settlements, I cannot see how that should make a great difference, particularly as most coloured people are quite capable of thinking out things for themselves. At all events, the need to bring about uniformity is apparent, and this is one of the matters which could be readily rectified under Federal control.

PROHIBITION : Generally speaking, intoxicating liquor to the native is sheer poison and its effect disastrous. Its consumption accounts for most of his crimes and a lot of his ill-health. It

reduces him in many instances to an impotent creature, and those who supply it to him commit a moral as well as a civil crime.

Drink is illegally supplied in all sorts of subversive ways. It is obtained in some wine saloons and licensed houses. It comes to native camps through debased whites posing as friends of the natives, or seducers of native women. It is supplied, often in the shape of cheap wine, by the employers, and I have known it to be obtainable at some missions, though possibly without the consent of the management of those places. In all these directions it is difficult to suppress the practice.

One wonders why it is that drinking of liquor by a native is so deleterious to him. Perhaps it is because he gets so few opportunities of indulgence in it that when he does, he indulges to excess, or because being so unused to it, it affects him unduly, or there may be something in alcohol which is peculiarly harmful and repellent to the nature of the human creature we term native.

In the earliest days of settlement it was the law that a portion of a servant's wage might be paid in rum, and since rum was demanded many times a day the evils of intoxication became a serious problem. In these excesses no doubt the native servants played their part. In the days of penal settlement, ticket-of-leave men and parties of convicts

mixed freely with the natives, and supplied them with drink when hideous orgies often followed. In consequence of these evils our preventive laws were gradually tightened until, throughout Australia, except in Victoria where a half-caste may do as he pleases, it became an offence for natives to be supplied with intoxicating liquor, or for them to obtain it. Here again ambiguities arise through the use of the term half-caste as meant to apply to anyone who is not a full-blood but of aboriginal descent.

Now there are many natives living decently in close contact with whites who feel their position in this regard very keenly, and who might surely be calculated to behave correctly if granted the privilege of consuming intoxicating liquor. We were told recently of a gunner in New South Wales who was refused a drink in hotels, and who complaining of this declared that it was the principle he worried about and not the drink. I know of lots of others who have made similar complaints. Here again exemption is a lever which is employed, and it is to be feared that the native has regarded the ability to obtain liquor legally when exempted as the main reason for seeking the privilege, when it is the last reason which should be put forward.

While being thoroughly conversant with the evils attached to the supplying of liquor to natives,

And particularly full-bloods whom for their own sake I should debar entirely, there seems good reason for relaxing somewhat in the case of those coloured people whom we consider to have reached a state of culture more or less comparable with our own. Indeed if we are to pursue the matter logically we must in time grant these all the privileges we ourselves enjoy.

The New Zealand Licensing Act of 1908 contains a provision governing the supplying of liquor to Maoris which might provide a guide to us in this direction. Under that Act male natives of New Zealand may be supplied with liquor for consumption on licensed premises only. Female natives may not be supplied at all unless being the wife of a person who is not a native or upon a medical certificate. The consumption of liquor on licensed premises can be regulated and would not be likely to be abused to any extent. It is the supply in other subservient directions already referred to which does nearly all the harm.

The history of the negro in America epitomises the story of our coloured folk. In spite of Federal laws throughout their history granting them definite concessions, many of the States passed other laws nullifying the effect of some of these provisions, and it is advisable that we should avoid the evils of such disharmony in Australia

HEALTH : Whether we mean to press on with absorption or leave things as they are, the question of health is of supreme importance.

Although I think it can be stated that some improvement has taken place in recent years in bettering the health of our coloured people there remains much to be done. Hitherto the negative aspect, that is, just that things should not be done has been the only explanation to these people in matters of health and hygiene, but little or no instruction has been given them in the direction of ensuring a healthier way of life, and in the prevention of illness. Indeed, they have accepted ill-health as they accepted everything else, as something to be tolerated in an outlook which is generally hopeless, a fatalistic view which has ended for many of them in premature death.

What a pity it is that our first missionaries were not medically trained men. If the healing of the body had preceded or accompanied attempts to transform the mind, how much better the position would be now. A sick, pain-ridden, or starving man needs physical attention before you can get him to consider ethical matters. The medical man would have discovered the wants of our native people sooner and more authoratively than anyone else and so have influenced the flow of necessities.

In Western Australia no native need lack medical,

surgical, dental or ocular attention if he cares to let his condition be known, and here is where inspection comes in. Specially appointed Medical Officers are constantly travelling throughout the country examining all natives they can make contact with, even to the far interior of the unsettled North. Anywhere in the State the rule is to attend the sick wherever they can be found, and this attention is free of cost to the native. Government settlements and most other native institutions receive periodical visits from Medical Officers in whose hands is placed the maintenance of health in these communities. Government Dental Officers visit settlements as they do the State schools, and natives living in camps or elsewhere outside institutions are similarly assisted, even to the provision of free dentures and spectacles. The contributory Medical Funds of Western Australia and the Northern Territory ensure prompt medical attention for all native workers, provided employers freely co-operate.

Fortunately throughout southern Australia there is almost a complete absence of certain endemic diseases prevalent amongst full-bloods in some parts of the North, and it should be quite possible to ensure the continuance of this happy position by constant vigilance and examination.

Intestinal troubles in infancy, debility and pulmonary

complaints account for most of the deaths which occur amongst our coloured people, and these are conditions which are capable of rectification. As it is we can hardly expect anything else when the manner in which so many of the people are forced to live is considered. Dirty camps, crowded humpies, and some institutions provide fertile sources of infection, and it isn't any wonder that the public has come to regard the natives as particularly unhealthy. Malnutrition, through incorrect dieting, to some extent mitigated by recent Federal social provisions, has hitherto accounted for a lot of ill-health, and there is a considerable legacy of consequences to overcome. While there has been a sufficiency of commodities such as meat, white flour, tea and sugar, there has at the same time been a complete absence of those things which go to make a balanced diet. Given the means of leading normal lives such as we do ourselves, there isn't any reason to suppose that the native people would differ materially in their health condition from the rest of the community.

No doubt other States can claim to supply medical attention as in the case of Western Australia, so what then is the difficulty? It lies, I think, speaking generally, in the scarcity of hospital accommodation. Here we find much the same position as in the matter of education, a

position for which we whites are responsible. We admit natives freely to our lockups, gaols and asylums, but when they are ill and most need our help, they must languish in unsuitable surroundings.

Governments rightly maintain that public hospitals are equally available to all, brown, black, brindle or white, and where such hospitals exist their readiness to treat native patients has been freely availed of. The same cannot be said of District or subsidised hospitals, particularly where the governing bodies is comprised of local residents. To many of these, natives have been consistently refused admittance, and expectant mothers have not been taken into maternity wards on some pretext or another. Indeed so acute has the position become in some centres that natives rather than make an attempt to seek admission only to be rebuffed, conceal their condition until quite often it is late to save their lives. It is certain that many lives would have been saved in the past if ready hospitalization could have been arranged. As a rule the native does not regard himself as unwell unless he suffers pain, and in any case, aware of the feeling against his entry, hates entering a hospital not intended entirely for his own people, and too often has an idea that his admittance is merely a prelude to his demise.

Often when some country hospital has declined to admit a native patient, I have been impelled to force the position by appealing to the State Medical Authorities by whose over-riding direction alone admittance could be obtained.

But I came to the conclusion, after years of this sort of thing, that it was no good to the native, and the only course was to make separate provision for his hospitalization, or at least supply separate wards for native patients wherever they might be needed, and it is essential too that all principal native institutions should be provided with hospitals on standards equal to our own, at all events during the process of assimilation. One is not blaming the public for their attitude in this matter any more than the refusal to have their children educated beside native children, for like reasons.

Now though there are some hospitals or hospital wards provided for natives alone, for some reason or other it has not been deemed necessary to equip or furnish these to the same extent as white hospitals. Some of these are mere galvanised iron sheds, intolerable in the summer in most inland districts. Some places in which the women have been compelled to produce their infants, ought to fill us with shame, but too often babies are born amidst unspeakable camp conditions because there

is no other place to which the mothers can go. No wonder infant mortality is rife! We have tintured the same old outlook, that anything is good enough for the natives.

The standard of our best native hospitals too, is often far inferior to the most modest country hospital for whites, and the good work in saving life which those in charge have carried out in all these unsuitable places and under the most adverse of conditions, has always seemed to me to be beyond praise.

Akin to the hospitalization difficulty is the tendency of the native to conceal illness, or try himself to attend sickness in his family. Many a native was brought to me in *extremis*, when had I but known of his condition sooner, life might have been saved.

Because of this tendency to conceal their condition, it is provided in the Western Australian Administrative Act of 1936 that native suspected of suffering from illness or disease can be compulsorily examined and compelled to submit themselves for necessary treatment. The provision has been copied in other States, and its enforcement has been a means of checking illness in many cases which might otherwise have proved fatal. It has been necessary to place natives forcibly in hospital from which they have absconded, only to be brought back again perhaps

two or three times and held until cured. This is possibly one of the provisions which our critics claim to be an abrogation of the rights of the citizen, but is it not in fact a measure of compulsion which we are to-day considering applying to our own people?

Epidemics have always taken a severe toll of our native people, and this is not to be wondered at considering the manner in which they have been compelled to live. But even so with efficient care the loss through these causes can be much lessened or eliminated. In the West we began immunisation measures some time ago. When pneumonic influenza was raging throughout Australia the inmates of camps suffered severely, but two of our largest settlements which were forcibly and completely quarantined throughout the epidemic were not required to treat a single case. Every settlement should possess a quarantine area and the healthy and diseased should never be mixed or interned at the same institution.

It has been customary to claim that certain social diseases are rife amongst the natives, but there is nothing to show that this is especially so. On the contrary, if the experience of Western Australia, where more than one special survey has been made, is also that of the other States, the position in this respect can be said to be satisfactory.

It was disclosed not long ago that out of nearly eight thousand natives examined in Western Australia, only three and one-third per cent showed any re-action to venereal disease. Later research in the same connection shows a similar position.

Admittedly concealment of the disease is likely amongst those who find it difficult to draw attention discreetly to their condition, and the native has had little encouragement in this respect.

In the co-ordination of health measures then a great opportunity awaits a complete Federal system, one which will ensure that all natives, whether in institutions, in camps or elsewhere, be assured of close medical inspection and attention.

CONCLUSION.

HERE ends my plea on behalf of Australia's coloured minority.

Let us not be deluded into believing that this minority is too small to be worthy of notice. It is true it is more apparent in some States than in others. It is also true that the effects of its presence may not be felt greatly in this generation, but sooner or later our descendants will wake up to it unless suitable action is taken now. As one speaker said at the Canberra Conference : "We do not wish to have collateral growth of an untouchable population in Australia." It is surely better to take the matter in hand when the numbers are still small and it is comparatively easy to deal with the problem, which if neglected, may grow quite out of control. Already we have embryo Harlems in all our capital cities, and who knows what influences in the near future will tend towards the more rapid growth of these already prolific people. The first negro to settle in Harlem went there in 1900, and there are now two hundred thousand in that part of New York.

Are we then to continue going along the same aimless way – must these people always remain a people apart, perpetually at odds with us,

perpetually suffering inferiority in every way, a constant sore spot upon our civilization, always maintained more or less at the country's expense – or are we going to elevate them to their proper place in the community? That is the question.

As a people the natives have suffered enough. The crimes of their progenitors such as they were should not condemn their descendants to ever-lasting degradation, to the Slogan of the seventies that they could never be more than hewers of wood and drawers of water, and at that under conditions akin to slavery.

If, divorced from their antecedents, you can but bring yourselves to regard these coloured children as meriting equal care with your own, then the rest will be easy – nay it should be a pleasure to produce and watch over the result, this slow growth towards the total enlightenment of a people.

You cannot retrieve the past, neither can you expect this generation to rise above it in a year or two, steeped in a long tradition of inertia as it is. It may take years to bring about the desired transformation, but it can be done I am certain, provided we adopt the right measures.

At any period in the more recent past this re-generation might have been undertaken had we willed it, and now by now the task might have been

partly accomplished instead of hardly begun. It will not be done now unless it is begun by those who have vision and see the green light ahead. As Madam Chiang Kai-Shek told Congress in Washington, "While we must not be visionary, we must have vision."

It is in your hands, do not leave it to a few enthusiasts only ; insist that Parliaments and Governments shall play their part, that Churches shall look beyond the interests of particular Missions to the entire purpose of the plan. Then perhaps we shall begin to see the clear road ahead, and the "native question" at last will be removed from the odium which surrounds it now ; until the term has no longer any meaning and absorption becomes a fact instead of wishful thinking.

In spite of all the other deserving needs of our still young community, there is room and means to spare for this most deserving work.

PLATES



QUADROON GIRL

Father—Australian
White.

Mother—Half-blood
(First Cross)





HALF-BLOOD
Chinese-Aboriginal
Girl



THREE GENERATIONS

(Reading from Right to Left)

1. Half-blood—(Irish-Australian father; full-blood Aboriginal mother).
2. Quadroon Daughter—(Father Australian born of Scottish parents; Mother No. 1).
3. Octaroon Grandson—(Father Australian of Irish descent; Mother No. 2).