TERRITORY ‘WELFARE - A MYTH?’

Following the work of Colin Tate of Monash University, and the Standing Committee on Integration of the Legislative Council of the Northern Territory, amongst others, it has been clearly proven that a gap exists in the Commonwealth Government’s policy on Aborigines as it is applied in the Northern Territory.

The area of uncertainty relates to the failure of the present Government welfare programme, after the expenditure of a sum in excess of Fifty million dollars, to produce any significant group of indigents who might be considered to be ‘self-sustaining units in our economy.’

Although one can appreciate the magnitude of the task which has faced the Welfare Branch in the Northern Territory, it is questionable whether the vast amounts of money which have been allocated to these purposes have been spent wisely. When compared with the achievements of welfare organisations in other States which have been in receipt of significant and lesser funds, the results of the Northern Territory system give rise to many misleading questions.

For example, whilst the Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory was lending its tacit support to employers in an endeavour to maintain Aboriginal rates of pay at a fraction of that enjoyed by European workers, in other States Aboriginal employees in the cattle industry were demanding and receiving rates which were 400 to 700 per cent higher than the legal rates established by the Northern Territory Administration.

One of the most obvious weaknesses of the pattern of existence which has been created for Aborigines in the Northern Territory, as distinct from, say Western Australia, where Aborigines enjoy rates of pay comparable with Europeans, is the system of settlements and institutions which has been built up. There are far removed from the urban areas and the obvious centres where Aborigines might receive any benefit from association with other Australians.

Conceived and built in a period of strict segregation, these institutions have been consistently shown to be one of the major obstacles to assimilating Aborigines into the broader Australian community. However, the present administration persists in their operation, in defiance of world-wide experience in the process of readjustment of aboriginal native people.

In the case of settlements in the Northern Territory, not only does their operation sap the energies of the Welfare Branch, which in any case is inadequate to its task, but ensures that Aborigines are removed from the centres of exposure, experience and workforce absorption.

It is significant, in this respect, that although the Northern Territory European workforce has multiplied by nearly 400 per cent since the Second World War, there are, today, fewer Aborigines employed in the general community than there were during the War.

N.T. WELFARE BRANCH FAILS

The Welfare Branch rationalises its failure in this respect by claiming that they persist with these institutions to ‘introduce Aborigines to the concept of work as a worthwhile aim in life’. Unfortunately, a significant percentage of the inhabitants to whom they are introducing these noble ideas were either removed from areas of employment after the War or are now able to acquire themselves in employment in a manner not vastly different to that of the Australian workforce. Others have drifted into the settlements to escape the frequently harsh conditions experienced on Northern Territory cattle stations.

Whilst the settlements have attracted increasingly large numbers of individuals from a location in which they might be able to find employment, the Welfare Branch has done little to ensure that the conditions which have been offered as alternatives to living on settlements are at least, better than the free hand-out. Not one employer of Aboriginal labour has been prosecuted for failure to meet the legal conditions of employment established some twenty years ago, although none of them appear to have met the conditions agreed to on their behalf at that date.

On the settlements the process of waferisation has been made complete by the larger funds which have been available to the Branch in recent years. With more funds available it has been able to take care of an increasing number of Aboriginal needs with the consequence that the mandarins, although in the main able-bodied people, have been forced to do less and less for themselves.

The Branch, being wary of Aboriginal publicity, has refused to allow the growth of any independent political organisation within the settlements by which Aborigines might demand some form of participation in their own affairs. On these grounds, they have refused the right of the Northern Territory Council for Aboriginal Rights to meet on Government property, restricted the movement of its members and sided with the pastoral employers in trying to obtain a return to work of the strikers under unacceptable conditions.

INDEPENDENCE UNDERMINED

The process of dependency by which Aborigines have been robbed of almost everything but their self-respect, was adequately described by Sister Kettle, M.R.E. a nurse working in the welfare system of the Northern Territory, in her recent book ‘Gone Bush’.

‘Men who had once been proud, now cut around idle, or dragged rakes over yards which did not require raking...because it was said that they could not be given food without earning it. Even their food, which was good before it reached the kitchen, was cooked and handed to them. More homes were built for the white staff, while a village for Aborigines has been planned by white men and a contract let to white men to do the building. The situation...has occasionally been explosive; work is what the discontented need, not punishment.’

The village mentioned by Sister Kettle has been built. Created out of aluminium and manufactured in Adelaide, it was hauled to the site and erected at a cost of approximately $3500 per unit. Whilst discontented Aborigines, looking for work, sat around, the contractor’s employers were flown up from Adelaide to erect the ‘houses’.

Work was ordered to be stopped on any further experiments on local materials out of which the Aborigines themselves were building European style homes for a cost to the Branch of approximately $100.

The design of the ‘transitory housing’ as the aluminium structures were called was the result of some hasty time ‘dodging’ by an architect in the Department of Works in Darwin. They have proved to be virtually useless in the torrid climate of the Territory and are used by the natives, primarily to store their weapons and to keep their dogs out of sight of the authorities. But the Welfare Branch is committed to an extension of this programme.

COMMUNITY SEGREGATED

The dilemma with which the Welfare Branch is faced is a matter of its own making. Whilst Western Australia engaged in a process of broadening employment opportunity and increasing social and economic mobility, the Northern Territory Administration concentrated on a system of restraint which contained most of the features of South African apartheid.

Continued on page 2.
This is the first national newspaper produced by Aboriginals. Initiated in the belief that too little information was being disseminated on Aboriginal affairs, Absoch felt that the potential scope and amount of this information was great enough to justify a regular national newspaper, printed about four times a year.

The present state of Aboriginal conditions, and the obvious ignorance of the public which allows the situation to be tolerated, alone justifies some means of making people aware of this. Too often good articles, based on extensive research, remain hidden in obscure academic journals. A broadly-based newspaper presented in a popular form, seems to be a preferable method of making important facts and opinions on the subject accessible to the community.

Furthermore, the activity and flux in Aboriginal affairs over the last twelve months calls for some effective organ of expression. The referendum, the creation of the new Commonwealth Department, the belated awareness that action is necessary in many fields, and the unprecedented expansion of Absoch itself during 1967, have all contributed to this activity and require the media of communication which this paper now attempts to provide.

Countless problems, chiefly financial, hampered production, and the fate of the newspaper hung in the balance on more than one occasion. Obvious deficiencies in style and layout must therefore be excused where they occur. Although large economies were made wherever possible, the funds available were still well below the amount needed to cover printing and typesetting costs.

It was only through the very generous help of Mr. SMITH of CANNBERA PUB-lishing Company, who printed the paper at an extremely low cost, that it finally appeared at all. Absoch is very grateful to him for his great assistance.

The future of Aboriginal Quarterly depends solely on the financial assistance received from organisations and individuals who would like to see the newspaper continue. There are enough people willing and able to produce a second issue at the end of May, if the printing and typesetting costs can be covered. Several good articles could not be included in the present issue because of the lack of funds and the editor apologises to the authors of these.

Finally, the editor would particularly like to thank Carol Pally of Adelaide University for her tireless and unfailing work and devotion, without which the idea of a national Absoch paper would never have become a reality. Wendy Major and her typing assistants persisted courageously with the IBM Compaq on which the paper was typeset. To them and to the enthusiastic staff, the editor extends his sincere appreciation.

*Continued from page 1.*

In the Northern Territory, Aborigines were discouraged from living in the towns, in which Europeans or making social life in the broader community. The result is a community segregated in education, hospitalisation, residence and work opportunities. To ensure that the boundaries were not breached, the Welfare Branch was given the power to prohibit contact between Aborigines and Europeans and frequently used it.

The only solution to this impasse is for the Welfare Branch to appreciate that assimilation means the integration of the two communities—and the relegation of Aboriginal opportunity to the perimeter of white society.

But to do this it must breach the citadel of European preserve—the Northern Territory urban area. It has been clearly shown to date that the planners behind the “assimilation” programme in the Northern Territory are rather reluctant to promote Aboriginal interests in the face of resistance from the European community.

Meanwhile, Aboriginal “workers” must be content with dragging brooms around over dusty compound yards to give the impression of work and public servants must produce the necessary figures to ensure that everybody is happy with the messquetry.

FRANK EVANS
Research Fellow
Department of Economic History
Institute of Advanced Studies
Australian National University.

Absoch is the Aboriginal Affairs Department of NUANU. It might be asked why NUANU should have one of its major departments concerned with Aborigines. Absoch was begun in 1963 to provide university scholarships for Aborigines. From this beginning, it has grown to cover all Aboriginal affairs activities.

There is a great need for all groups in Australia to play a role. Why in 1968 will 8000 Aboriginal children leave school without attending any secondary school at all? Why is there only one in every 2500 Aborigines at university —this compared with one in every 150 Europeans?

Aboriginal conditions are a long standing blot on Australia’s so-called, and much abused, “equal opportunity.” Aborigines are not even trained for secondary class citizenship.

Absoch has assisted the only two Aborigines ever to graduate from a university, (Charles Perkins and Margaret Vathlan). We assisted four undergraduates last year.

But the chief education difficulties are in the secondary schools. Even in Queensland, South Australia, and Victoria, only 10% of Aboriginal children go past second year. For two reasons this is simply not good enough —it represents inequality and wastes human resources. This year 1000 people will be assisted to scholarships in high school. Absoch is the only national Aboriginal education organisation and has received applications in all states. BUT it has had to knock back worthwhile applicants because it has insufficient money.

A limited public appeal will be held just to ensure that we can continue in 1969, let alone expand our activities. We must have students to help.

Absoch also conducts research activities into problems of which no adequate diagnoses have ever been undertaken. In January Absoch held a summer school attended by teachers from all over Australia. It was a highly powered discussion paper and papers were contributed by delegates from all states in Australia and from New Zealand. At last information will be available for teachers who have been trained only to approach the average European child. The proceedings will be published in a 600 page book to go on sale in June.

To promote contact between students and aborigines Absoch organises work camps —there will be one in —and tutoring schemes. Students should see their local Absoch director about this. Last year there were over a hundred applicants for a work camp at Musgrave Park. (1000 miles north-west of Adelaide), but only thirty-five could be selected. It is now a truism that the answer to future difficulties lies in adequate government (especially Commonwealth) policy making and activity. Absoch is becoming increasingly active as a pressure group in the field of Aboriginal affairs. Perhaps better writing, demonstrating, and lobbying MP’s will be one of the major tasks. Some of the questions Absoch will pursue are the situation in Queensland —there will be a conference in Brisbane in May—Aboriginal land rights, and the need for a National Aboriginal Affairs Council.

Absoch: the abbreviation of Aboriginal Scholarship Scheme, has developed far from its original size and scope and is one of the major Aboriginal affairs organisations in Australia. What is more it is supported by the aborigines themselves. We need more and more students to raise funds, do research, educate the community. Absoch can be no more active than the students are. 1967 saw an unprecedented expansion of Absoch activities, and this must be maintained through 1968.

If you are interested in joining Absoch, please fill out this form and return it to the Local Absoch Director at your University. C/o your SRC/ACU/Guild Office. If you cannot contact him, write to the National Absoch Director, 52 Story Street, Parkville, Victoria, 3052.

Interested in these activities of Absoch:

1. Publications
2. Research
3. Money Raising
4. Work Camps

Name:
Address:
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A WET, BEAT IT! SPORT! CARNA SEE
I'M BUSY LISTENIN' TO A FIGHT
WE WON, WE WON... DUN NERHIN...
SEE... CHILL AUSTRALIANS ARE TERRIFIC ANP MATE!

by courtesy of the Adelaide News
ABORIGINAL QUARTERLY

VERNACULAR BREAKTHROUGH

aboriginal language course begins in south australia

H.J. SILLIUS, Director, Language Laboratory, University of Adelaide.

A REPORT ON THE FIRST COURSE IN THE PITJANTJATJARA LANGUAGE HELD IN THE LANGUAGE LABORATORY, ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY. JAN 1968.

This article describes why the course was held, how it was organised, and what we hope to have achieved.

It was held because we were asked to do this. It is in itself remarkable, since it is proof that the idea of dealing with Aboriginals in the vernacular is gaining ground. There is still a dearth of resistance to the idea that while Australians should learn native languages to communicate with them; but the arguments in favour of dealing with them in English are overused. The fact that there are many different languages and dialects does not absolve us from the duty to learn at least one of the widely used languages that will be understood over a large area. The argument that native languages are very difficult for us to learn is based on ignorance. If the choice is between US learning their language, or US learning ours, I believe we have the advantage, especially in view of our superior education.

Finally, one often hears that it is unnecessary for us to talk a native language, since at least some of the people are proficient in English. The experience of field workers would warn us here: Aborigines can read their heads and say yes, but their actions often show that they have not really understood the issue. Very few of them can communicate in depth outside their own native language. This is the considered opinion of welfare workers, doctors, nurses, and missionaries.

The whole issue of the vernacular approach to Aboriginal problems has been debated more rationally of late, and as a result of government action, such as the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Special Branch of the Education Department are now anxious that at least some of their staff members should learn Pitjantjatjara. The question now was, how this could be done.

Tentative inquiries were made of the University's Department of Adult Education which had, on previous occasions, organised courses on Aboriginal topics. But there was no indication that any problem was it was passed on to me, as Director of the Language Laboratory.

The only rational way of teaching languages to adults is by means of intensive language laboratory courses. For this one needs carefully prepared material, handouts, and specially trained teachers. I knew that no materials were available and that none of the linguists I knew had any experience with language laboratory courses.

The only person to have made a tentative beginning with the teaching of Pitjantjatjara to white Australians is Jim Downing, a social worker attached to the Flynn Memorial Church at Alice Springs. Not having been trained as either a linguist or a language teacher, Jim had to gain his knowledge of the language from the people he worked with, and his ideas about methods from books, especially those on the situational method used to teach English to migrants. Jim usually manages to keep one step ahead of his class.

During 1967, however, he met a young American linguist, Ken Hale, who was in Alice Springs on a scholarship to do some linguistic research. Ken is a trained linguist and fluent in several Aboriginal languages, as well as a dozen European ones. He was just about to return to the United States when I contacted him, but he postponed his flight by a week so that we could work together for the first time. Although he was fluent in Pitjantjatjara, Ken confessed that he had never spoken Pitjantjatjara before, although he had programmed instruction. Hence it was decided that he and I should cooperate. As preparation, Ken had read books on programming and he suggested a Pitjantjatjara grammar to me.

After we had met, we broke down the language into small units into small units, decided on the basic vocabulary and the general course content. Between us we then built it all up again into a logical step-by-step progression, from one unit to the next. Within six days we produced sixteen lessons for a basic intensive course of three weeks' duration. As soon as one unit was finished it was typed by Jim Downing, and checked and corrected by Gordon. A day or two later it was in small units, and the transcriptions were typed Ken Hale returned to the United States.

In the following September holidays the actual tapes were produced in the Language Laboratory in Adelaide. Gordon was invited to speak the tapes, and he was joined by Miss Lucy Lesley, a native speaker now living in Adelaide.

The tapes proved to be indispensable a teaching aid as the booklet which we subsequently produced from the manuscripts. Modern methods of language teaching stress the oral-aspects, not only for the sake of better pronunciation and understanding, but also to make the grammar more spontaneous and not just an intellectual exercise. Language learning involves an intellectual grasp of general rules, but these rules do not guarantee an accurate performance in the language, as anyone knows who did four years of school English, but cannot converse in the language.

Language learning is not only a matter of insight, but also of skills and habits. In a way it is more like learning a musical instrument, which requires a knowledge of theory, but also constant practice in order to become a performer. We are interested in producing language performers rather than solid grammarians, for language is essentially a means of communication. This is why a course such as ours devotes a good deal of time to repetition, imitation, questions and answers, and oral drilling of structures.

Once the tapes had been produced, the next step was to find teachers. We invited Wolf Douglas, the author of a descriptive grammar of the Western Desert languages, to be our language instructor. Jim Downing and Nancy Shepard, an anthropologist from Ernabella School, to share the work in the Language Laboratory and the tutorial room. Moreover, Gordon and Lucy were invited to help with the pronunciation.

UNDERSTANDING CREATED

The Department of Adult Education which sponsored the course received about 45 applications from prospective participants. Most of these were sponsored by the S. A. Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Education Department, but we had also nursing sisters, clerks, a police officer, a Labour Ministry employee, and a number of researchers who came because they felt the need to learn the language.

All these people duly arrived on the 2nd January, and settled down to an intensive five hours per day for three weeks. Grammar and pronunciation were given in the first period to the whole group. Then the students divided into two groups, one of which went to the lab. for practice, while the other did some private study in tutorial. After the end of the second period the groups were switched around. After lunch the whole procedure was repeated.

It is not easy to gauge the success of such a course. Certainly there was a fine and keen atmosphere of learning during the course. But individuals differ greatly in their rate of absorption. The top dozen or so (as indicated by test results) were almost faultless, everyone attained a good standard of pronunciation. The majority raised a solid knowledge of the elements of the language and only one or two people were completely at sea.

It will depend a great deal on the use of these people are going to make of their knowledge. If, upon returning to the field, they put it into action straight away, they will now have been consolidating their knowledge. If they do not practice it constantly, their knowledge will no doubt fade. But even if they do not use it constantly, they will, we hope, retain a number of useful phrases which they can use when dealing with Aborigines called for. It is true that the number of people is small, and since the dark people of this continent will know that this person has gone to some trouble to understand them. Every one phrase will help to establish a bond of good-will; it is a word of welcome to meet them half-way, and for this the Aborigines are very grateful. We are confident, therefore, that this course has made a significant contribution towards a greater understanding between the races.

OF SEALING WAX, WASTE PAPER BINS, PARLIAMENT MEMBERS' ROOMS AND ABORIGINES

Social Welfare Minister Snedden's untimely comment following the 1967 Referendum on Aborigines, that the Federal Government had no particular plans in mind concerning what they intended to do with the newly achieved power under the Constitution, was turned to some advantage by Mr. Holt's strong line in the appointment of one of Australia's ablest administrators, H.C. Coombs, to the post of Chairman of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs. However, as the Snedden affair's ghost in the cupboard continues to remind elected officers that it took the Federal Government sixty six years to be moved by the plight of the aborigines these seems little desire to keep the quiet rolling.

In a recent issue of the Commonwealth Gazette, the first non-appointed position in the Office was advertised. The post is that of Senior Research Officer whose requirements are a University Degree and relevant experience. Maximum salary is $56123. The same advertisement also includes a need to coordinate the facilities and accommodation for Ministers and Opposition Leader etc. No University qualifications or experience needed. Maximum salary $7147.
Presumably the aims of an isolated "reserve" or community for a minority group such as the Aborigines at present is either to allow them to pursue their own culture in peace and privacy or by gradual education, to assimilate to the culture to that of the majority population.

Neither of these aims seems to have been fulfilled on Palm Island. The number of Europeans present and the whole "Welfare"-dictated organisation of the place rules out the first alternative, while the second can never eventuate where racial prejudice motivates action.

Consider the following: On an island approximately 10 x 3 miles the layout is as pictured below, (2) and (3) are schools - one for 52 white children, the other is for about 500 aboriginal children.

Bearing in mind the definition of 'assimilation' - the abolition of the system - the absurdity of government policy in this matter is obvious. How can one expect anyone to be enthusiastic about being absorbed into any system where the very absorption process seems to point out the inferiority and undesirability of those to be assimilated?

Education is the key-stone for any assimilation program. What must an aboriginal child think when his teacher speaks of the freedom and equality of all men - the supposed basis of our "democratic" culture - and then the same child glances across at the white children's school?

(4) is the General Grocery run by the Department of Native Affairs. Another interesting study in "assimilation": The aboriginals may not run accounts and must line up for their purchases while the white brothers are served immediately and are able to run accounts.

(5) represents the butchery which has been described as a "disgusting disgrace" - being filthy, fly-blown and inadequate. It so happens that the refrigeration plant does not work, so meat cannot be kept longer than one day, and yet it is imported only twice a week. This state of affairs is tolerated by the European Hygiene Officer who also overlooks such minor details as the overcrowded and stagnant state of the creeks, and septic systems in "sour" soil. Consequently there is a high frequency of parasitic disease on the island.

Meat is given free (under government subsidy) to Aborigines and therefore is not considered worth wrapping up, while the cheapest cuts are reserved for the white population who buy it at 40 cents a pound (very cheap by mainland standards).

HOUSING SEGREGATED

(7) is the girls' dormitory, (8) boys' dormitory is situated at (11). Resulting from the idea that all aboriginal teenagers must be saved from their tendency to sexual promiscuity, the single girls are separated into this dormitory. The result is a breakdown in family relations and (oh, shock!) an increase in sexual promiscuity. Apparently aboriginal girls do not have any moral scruples about having sex before the 10 p.m. curfew.

Looking further at what is offered for education, one wonders and eventually cries to wonder at the intricate workings of the 'Welfare' mind. The "Home Training Centre" (9) for example, is a good idea in itself, but the only staff teacher is not qualified to teach domestic science!

Housing facilities are another interesting study in black and white.

(9) represents the 'White Quarters' which entail the only curbed and guttered, tree-lined, two-laned street on the island.

The aboriginal quarters as represented by (11) consist of small houses each on a separate block of land. This sounds fine until one considers that they are jerry-built, and in too much of a hurry for the timbers to mature properly, as a result of which they have since warped. The soil is unsuitable and overloaded. Above all, the houses are far too small, when one considers that aboriginal families are usually large.

(14) This is the maternal and child welfare clinic, a generally well-run department but with a tendency to become overbearing and to "take over" the babies from 9 to 5. It also supplies all the powdered milk, baby's clothes, etc. needed by the child up to the age of 5 years. Although the Child Endowment money for all children up to the age of 5 automatically goes to this clinic and more than covers the benefits received, those in charge often act as if they are kindly giving things away, rather than dispensing what the Aborigines' property in any case.

Of the other social services provided unemployment relief provides another example of government short-sightedness and the general superficial attitude. These benefits are often comparable to full-employment wages for Aborigines which are notoriously lower than wages for Europeans though no-one has as yet produced a factual, emotionally unbiased reason why this should be the case. These high employment benefits effectively remove the financial incentive to work, especially as work itself is so hard to get, a privilege in fact. It is strange that critical Europeans are never able to picture themselves in an equivalent situation, and then answer honestly if it would remain industrious and sober under the circumstances.

WAGE POLICY SHORT-SIGHTED

This opens up the whole question of wages. To illustrate the situation most graphically it might be best to take the financial situation of one particular person. The position of a sergeant of police is one of the best paid jobs. Contrary to most earnings of $8 - 9 a week, the aboriginal sergeant on Palm Island receives the princely sum of $14 per week.

Furthermore, food is rationed out to all from the Welfare and Hygiene Department (according to what the latter deems enough for one family)

KEY

- 1. Low tide mark
- 2. School (50 whites)
- 3. School (500 Aborigines)
- 4. Store
- 5. Butchery
- 6. Shed
- 7. Girls' Dormitory
- 8. Home Training Centre
- 9. 'White Quarters'
- 10. Hospital
- 11. Aboriginal Quarters
- 12. Old People home
- 13. Hygiene
- 14. Mother & Child Welfare
- 15. Theatre
but it is thus technically free. Housing and electricity are also free for employees on the island, so that the fully paid 'whites' make a tidy profit, while for the sergeant the total value of wages and handouts rises to something like $40 per week.

But the sergeant has nine children and articles such as clothing, books and so on are not free, being imported from Townsville. The sergeant is however still one of those best off. Most earnings range down from this and it is not unusual for a working man with a wife and two children to receive a total of only $20 a week.

The problem of education lies in directly contrary to this. Apart from the segregated primary school, all children are subsidized to go as far as they are allowed at North Queensland boarding schools. Naturally a large percentage of white children take advantage of this opportunity, but the number of aboriginal children who do is far smaller. This allows the quick and satisfying conclusion to be drawn, that aboriginal children are dumb, and it is left at that. Coy as such a view is one must look only a little deeper to discover the following formidable problems.

1. Financial Situation

With an average $8 - $12 a week to spend on a number of children for educational purposes, there is seldom enough for books, encyclopedia, plays etc., all of which are vital additions to the basic school learning. As any psychologist could tell one, the family environment is highly important for a child's intellectual development, and here, as in most economically indifferent families, the vital stimulus is lacking.

2. Segregation in Schools

This drastic solution to the problem of individual rates of learning, which is in turn bound up with the economic and social situation, instills in the aboriginal child from the earliest age the knowledge that he is inferior. Thus the competitive spirit, so vital for survival in our culture, which in itself is strange to the aboriginal way of thinking, is stifled rather than fostered. Furthermore segregation results in uneven teacher to child proportions so that the white children receive far more individual attention, giving them an added advantage.

3. High Schizophrenia Rate

This is not because of any higher incidence of schizophrenia among Aborigines, but because it is government policy to ship schizophrenics to Palm Island. As it is an inherited disease, its concentration on Palm Island rises.

TRISON WITHOUT WALLS

Racial prejudice even extends to the modern, well equipped hospital (10). It has 25 beds and 20 children's cots, a labour ward, theatre, outpatients and casualty departments and new staff quarters, and is therefore not used to its full potential. For example, one of the matron does not allow births in the labour ward because she has Aboriginal staff. This kind of logic on an Aboriginal Reserve is hard to credit.

This, together with everything of its kind, emphasizes the fact that general policy in regard to Aborigines, mainly because the aborigines themselves have very little say, is far too open to individual prejudice and misjudgement. Another potent example to illustrate this point, is the case of the Palm Island farm. About ten years ago, Palm Island was a self-sufficient farming community, even exporting vegetables to the mainland. It was an experiment and it succeeded very well. Too well in fact, for the advent of a new manager or even a resident on the island saw the end of all this. For reasons unknown, (to the author at least), this manager decided that the farmers on the mainland were very well able to take care of themselves.

So from a real community Palm Island regressed to what it now effectively is, a prison without walls. The tractors brought in the same still stand idle or tow cars around the island, an expensive waste, which is later grandly added to the total "Aboriginal Expenditure."

A radical reassessment of the whole approach to Aboriginal Welfare is obviously necessary. Policy should be standardized throughout the states but qualified and largely determined by the real needs of the aborigines, which they must be allowed to voice themselves. As assimilation of the type which now constitutes policy seems does not work - and Palm Island is a prime example of this - then another approach must be tried.

On a reserve like Palm Island the obvious answer would be so-called integration, where both races mix on an equal footing. The prime requisite for this would be an industry of some kind, like the farm mentioned above. The essential thing is that the aborigines must receive some sense of purpose, some part of our 'white' culture that they can utilize on an equal basis, to achieve some standing of self-respect and dignity in a culture so foreign to their own.

Another essential is a far greater understanding of the Aboriginal culture as such on the part of Europeans, especially in such matters as moral codes, which are very different from ours, but in their own way highly developed and ethical. For integration to take place there must be a coordination of many social and cultural standards and gradual concessions must be made on both sides, to come to the ideal synthesis.

While Palm Island enjoys the aura of a penal colony, neither assimilation nor integration nor anything else of lasting value can possibly take place. Thus it is merely a tragic waste of time, money and great opportunity.
As a result of the constitutional amendment carried last May, the Commonwealth Parliament has authority to do whatsoever it wishes in the field of Aboriginal affairs. It can do things that the States have not attempted to do in Aboriginal affairs. It can make State laws redundant or it can co-operate with the States. One would hope that it would do all of these things and would develop a system which included the best of all present arrangements with a lot that is new.

Aboriginal advancement is distinct from the administration of Aborigines, is a virgin field. Very little effective work has been done in Australia by any Government or any administration. There has been a great deal of declaiming, but very little real, great deal of expensive work. But there is little that has been done which can be regarded as having produced advancement for the Aboriginal people of Australia.

I believe that very little will be achieved of a permanent effective nature until we have developed the self-esteem of the Aboriginal people themselves. That is, that more of them have achieved a say in their own affairs that more of them are taking part in the administration of Aboriginal affairs and that their voice is continually heard and continually applied. Money, power, money, land, legislation are all important, but the most effective weapon for the advancement of the Aborigines will be the development of their self-esteem and self-confidence.

Over the whole field of Aboriginal affairs Australia has probably performed worst of all equivalent nations. One has only to compare the position of the Maori in New Zealand and the Indian in North America as regard material position or the amount of effort applied on their behalf by Governments with that of Australia, to conclude that we are the worst performers on this planet. The Aborigine is the heir to 180 years of not so much neglect, as off-hand and perfunctory policy making.

This has produced discriminations over wide fields. There are legal discriminations by Australian standards which are different for the Aborigine from that of any other Australian. There is social discrimination, whether it is the efforts of the people of Bega or of Kempsey to prevent housing for the Aborigine on certain streets or, the other way around, the employer who refuses to give an Aborigine a job, or the proprietor of a hotel or a boarding house who finds he has no vacancies left if applied for by an Aborigine.

But there is one less forgivable, more easily removable discrimination. Nowhere near the amount of effort administratively is expended on the Aboriginal people as on the white community. There are large communities of white Australians which have no school system and are totally different for this, the labor list almost entirely of Aborigines. There is no telephone line to these communities. There is no fulminating medical service readily available. The expenditure on the schools and general public services in these two communities cannot be compared with the expenditure on the schools and general public services in the Aborigines. This is a significant result from the poverty of their general surroundings and their own personal position, and there is one which one could define as "negative discrimination". This results from Aborigines not knowing their own rights or having the power to apply them, so that in the courts of the North many more Aborigines than non-Aborigines are arrested and charged with drunkenness and appear before the courts without adequate legal representatives. This is just one example. Many more can come to mind.

How I would organize the new ministry.

The new Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs faces one of the most challenging tasks in Australian government. The Department must be launched with adequate resources. It has a Minister of known interest. The new Council has a Chairman of established and commendable reputation. What is needed in addition to this is financial resources and the co-operation of Commonwealth and State Governments at all levels. It will take some time to determine exactly what ought to be done in many fields, although some of the needs are immediate and visible such as in housing.

I would like to see a permanent, impartial and powerful watch dog established for the Aboriginal community. It is my belief at the moment that the best way to do this is for the Commonwealth Parliament to appoint a Standing Committee. A Standing Committee to watch the interests of the Aboriginal people of Yirrkala in Arnhem Land was recommended in the 1952 report of the Select Committee on the Affairs of the people of Yirrkala, but it was not appointed. I believe that a continuing Parliamentary Committee is the most potentially influential machinery available.

I would establish the new Department on the Repatriation Model. The Repatriation Department is Australia's most experienced social service organisation. It is the organization of various sorts of social service benefits for various sorts pre-date the establishment of the Repatriation Department, no other field of activity in social services has had the same continuous expansion as the Repatriation benefits. As the Repatriation Department nor has any other field such powerful groups nailing it up to attack anomalies and difficulties as they develop. The Repatriation Department over the last few years has been able to establish itself as a powerful force for the Aboriginal field, benefits in the Aborigines will be easily established.

They should be available to all people who can claim some Aboriginal ancestry or whose way of living brings them into the definitions of Aboriginal under the various State acts. For long enough thousands of people have been denied the benefits of Aborigines in order to bring people under restrictive laws. It should be simple enough to reverse this process to give benefits and have an equally effective clause added for the benefit of the Aborigines.

There are a number of fields for action. The first in my view is housing. There is some controversy about where one should begin. I should make it clear at this stage there is no reason why the Commonwealth Government should not begin at once in all the fields that I enumerate. The housing position of the Aboriginal people of

by R.R. Loveday
Minister for Education and Aboriginal Affairs, South Australia, 1957-1959.

The Minister also sent a message to Abolish wishing every success for the first issue of the newspaper.

by courtesy of the Canberra Times

The present South Australian Government has enacted a legislative program designed to remove causes of resentment felt by aboriginal people. First of all we made declarations and staged negotiations under the Aboriginal Affairs Act in order to remove all disabilities suffered by Aborigines by virtue of their race.

The restriction on their right to drink in the north and west part of the State - a restriction which had already been removed by the Government in the southern part of South Australia - was removed as soon as the Government took office, and we removed also from reserve regulations the special classes of offences which could be committed only by reserve residents.

We introduced and enacted the Aboriginal Lands Trust Bill, transferring to a Trust Board consisting entirely of Aborigines the unoccupied reserve lands in South Australia, with arrangements by which other reserve lands may be added to those held by the Aboriginal Trust for Aboriginal Councils on unoccupied reserves or for Aboriginal residents of certain reserves who wished their lands to be held under the Lands Trust.

We enacted the Prohibition of Discrimination Act which now makes it an offense in South Australia to commit any overt act racially discriminating against a person in the provision of public services, in employment, or in dealings with lands or the letting of dwelling houses. This Act carried into effect the provisions of the United Nations Draft Convention on Racial Discrimination which the Commonwealth of Australia has signed and which it has sought that the States should provide the necessary legislation for, so that the Commonwealth may ratify the Convention.

The training programs on the various reserves and the education programs adopted

Australia is desperate and degrading. There are a number of Aboriginal families who do live in normal average standard housing. There are one or two who manage to make the distance into above average standards of living. There are not many.

The number of families of Aborigines in Australia is unknown. It is probably in the order of 25,000 to 30,000. You could be assured that 80% at least of these need some assistance with housing. That means that there are probably 20,000 families who need immediate and urgent housing.

This housing, of course, can't be standard throughout Australia. The housing for an Aboriginal family in Arnhem Land is different from that required at Port Hedland, and the housing in either place would be completely irrelevant for the Aboriginal families who live in the capital cities. The Commonwealth has had wide experience in housing, not that it has shown any great adventurous spirit in the housing of its own public servants in Northern Australia. There is a depressing similarity between the houses in Darwin, the houses in Melbourne and those in Canberra.

Architects and Public Service Departments, Housing Commissions and private builders have shown very little regard for the differences in climate, but an Aboriginal housing authority would be facing a new kind of challenge.

It would appear to anybody that the traditional approach to housing would not be good enough and that therefore new thoughts would have to be brought into the field. It is in the Australian tradition that
A number of these deficiencies or diseases flow from deficiencies in diet. The standard diet in many areas of Northern Australia is appalling. The healing of food is disagreeable. The food for many Aboriginal families is - porridge with a heavy handicap. In many respects their experience of life is so restricted that as soon as they enter schools they are at a disadvantage with their contemporaries - white Australians - who are two or three years socially in advance of the Aboriginal child. It is usual for them to fall further behind and never catch up.

Kindergarten training will be important as well as assistance in the home. Families need friendly, good-neighbourly, unobtrusive assistance. The preschool schools in any community will need special equipment. Secondary schools need a new approach to the problem of keeping Aboriginal children at school. It is unfortunate that it is hardly relevant to talk of tertiary education for Aborigines. Only a handful are in universities, teachers' colleges or nursing training. But this has to be attacked. A programme has to be developed to give the school more holding power for its Aboriginal pupils.

But a good deal of this will be useless unless there is a new attack upon economic development. We draw lines from north of Cairns to Carnarvon through Alice Springs and almost half the population north of that line are Aboriginal people. In the Northern Territory, just under 50% of the population is in the 500,000 square miles of Aboriginal people. On Cape York, the great proportion of the population is Aboriginal, as it is in the north-west of Western Australia.

There are no economic prospects for these people whatever. They have a large opportunity of owning land, little training in the land beyond, and if they did obtain tenure, and there is no industry which will absorb the growing population of young people who are left to waste away in idleness, then there has been no approach to the economic development of the North.

A good deal has been done about extracting the resources of iron and bauxite and nickel, but nothing about extracting the resources in human resources which lie within the Aboriginal people. Coal mining should be established even if they have to be subsidised. If it is economic to subsidise the production of butter, it is fair enough to subsidise the production of coal, iron or ore or alumina in Aboriginal communities.

Until there is substantial opportunity for industrial employment there seems to be little point in taking children through the schools, for in the end they have lost whatever they had of their Aboriginal culture and they have obtained no key to security in non-Aboriginal society.

When was minister

have been designed to further our overall policy and we have had signal success already in a number of areas. In some of the southern reserves the development program is largely in building or welding work, although at Koombah we have a very good engineering workshop and a very good carpenter's workshop, and the carpenter's workshop provides a considerable amount of the furniture needed by the Department for the furnishing of Aboriginal houses.

On the Gerald Reserve, training includes work in the development of irrigated citrus and stone fruits. Experimental work for the Department of Agriculture is being carried out on the reserve and in the same eventually is to establish quite a large irrigated area of over 1,000 acres worked by Aboriginals in their own holding.

The employment field for Aboriginals is limited only by individual qualifications. Improving educational standards are resulting in more and more Aboriginals entering the professional and business fields. With added education and training they are in a position to hold down these positions as anyone else.

Aboriginal people are no longer living under paternal protection and are encouraged to accept the responsibility for the management of their own affairs. The old system of free housing, rations, medical attention etc, has been abolished. Employment and training is offered on all Reserves. Wages paid to Aboriginals employed on Reserves have been increased annually and the full basic wage is now being paid on all Reserves with the exception of the North West Aboriginal Reserve. This has enabled residents to meet normal commitments for the payment of house rent, food-stuffs, electricity, medical attention and other services which were previously available as a free issue.

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up to the general Australian standards.

A number of these deficiencies or diseases flow from deficiencies in diet. The standard diet in many areas of Northern Australia is appalling. The healing of food is disagreeable. The food for many Aboriginal families is primitive to the point of being non-existent. An attack upon the nutrition of many Aboriginal families would solve some of the problems in other health fields.

EDUCATION

Education is not just a matter of trying to pass university exams, Education continues from the cradle to the grave. No person is too young to train No person is too old to benefit from training. The Aboriginal has to work with a heavy handicap. In many respects their experience of life is so restricted that as soon as they enter schools they are at a disadvantage with their contemporaries - white Australians - who are two or three years socially in advance of the Aboriginal child. It is usual for them to fall further behind and never catch up.

Kindergarten training will be important as well as assistance in the home. Families need friendly, good-neighbourly, unobtrusive assistance. The preschool schools in any community will need special equipment. Secondary schools need a new approach to the problem of keeping Aboriginal children at school. It is unfortunate that it is hardly relevant to talk of tertiary education for Aborigines. Only a handful are in universities, teachers' colleges or nursing training. But this has to be attacked. A programme has to be developed to give the school more holding power for its Aboriginal pupils.

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LAND

Finally, there is the question of land. Land is the very spirit of the Aboriginal people. As it was described to the Yirrkala Committee, they drew spiritual refreshment from their tribal lands and these should be returned with the same tenderness with which the State Government would handle the favourite sports grounds of the community - say, the Melbourne or Sydney cricket ground. It is most unfortunate that the Aboriginal people have no tenure of land. They have no rights whatsoever. All is occupied under acts of grace. This must be altered.

A new legal formula must be developed which leaves the Aboriginal reserve at present existing in Aboriginal hands in perpetuity. The question of how you develop this is for the Opposition and the problem of the development of these reserves individually, equally or whether you develop funds for development community-wise is a question to be resolved. But it is essential that steps be taken immediately to preserve the land of the Aboriginal people.

This won't be easy. It will run up against many vested interests and many mysteries. There are those who cannot see or hear of mineral finds without demanding to drag it out of the ground now. This generation is a generation of vandalism. Our grandchildren five and six times removed will inherit nothing but holes in the ground.

On Aboriginal reserves the law is no different from that for the ordinary white community. But for the Aboriginal people there is no resting place. It can only be by a new approach to the question of land proprietorship by the Aboriginal that we will give them the kind of spiritual contentment which will allow them to raise themselves out of the rut of despair and become effective social units.

Government Departments will have to be more adventurous in appointing Aborigines to executive positions and in appointing Aborigines to managerial positions on reserves, ensuring Aboriginal families do have the opportunity to live in houses, living as the non-Aboriginals do. None of this involves much in the way of resources compared with the wealth of this country. $20 million would make a tremendous difference to the standard of living of thousands of Aboriginal people.

The difficulty is not so much either to find resources - the physical resources - but perhaps find the will to get started. So many favourite beliefs have to be challenged, so many people have to be confronted vigorously on the question of discrimination of all sorts that it will only be with the full support of all Parliaments, both parties and both Houses, that this will be attacked effectively in the next few years.
At Townsville, on the first and second of December 1887, a significant event occurred — significant in that nothing of the kind had ever happened in Queensland before, and significant in its implications for both the white and coloured populations of North Queensland. The event was officially termed an 'Inter-Racial Seminar' and was the result of hard work and co-operation between many and varied groups and individuals in Townsville.

Townsville

The organisation of the Seminar was not without its political problems, for the organising committee consisted of aborigines, islanders, trade unionists, churchmen, academics, professional men and others. Squabbling soon took place over the number of members the Trades and Labor Council and the churches were to have on the committee.

Before the Seminar did eventuate, clergyman had resigned because some of the coloured speakers were "on the left" and because of alleged "trade union political influence", and the Brisbane branch of O.P.A.L. (One People of Australia League), disassociated itself from the Seminar although its Townsville branch has been instrumental in the organisation.

The Seminar consisted of three parts: papers by specialists in Aboriginal and Island affairs, reports of sub-committees that had conducted surveys prior to the Seminar, and informal discussion groups after each paper.

Papers were given by Mrs. Faith Sandier, Secretary of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI); Mr. G. H. McInnes, Secretary of FCAATSI; Professor Rowley, now Professor of Political Science at the University of New Guinea; and Mr. Collis Tait of the Maohu Institute of Aboriginal Affairs.

Mrs. Sandier spoke of her involvement in attempts to get discriminatory legislation in New South Wales (e.g. drinking laws) repealed, of activity leading up to the 1967 referendum, of the fight to preserve La Perouse as a reserve for Aborigines, and of the general situation with regard to land rights.

She pointed out that because Aboriginal reserves in all States except South Australia are Crown Land, they can be reclaimed at any time. This has occurred at Weipa, where 2,500 sq. miles of the Reserve were Granted to Comalco when bauxite was discovered there, and in Arnhem Land, where 140 sq. miles of Aboriginal reserve was revoked in 1963.

DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION

Mr. McInnes' paper was mainly concerned with an examination of the 'Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders' Affairs Act 1945 (Queensland) and its accompanying Regulations, in terms of the powers it gave the Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs and the restrictions it placed upon 'assisted Aborigines'.

All assisted Aborigines and Islanders come under the jurisdiction of the Queensland Act. The term 'assisted' easily applies to persons who were living on reserves at the time the Act came into force but it is to be noted that the Director, a Stipendiary Magistrate, is empowered to declare an Aborigine or Islander assisted.

He pointed out that the Regulations allow the Manager of a reserve to declare an assisted Aborigine in a dormitory for a period of up to six months, and for further periods of six months, provided that the Director of the Department is informed to this effect.

Reasons for detention are very loosely defined in the Act. They include such things as being 'guilty of an immoral act or immoral conduct', leaving, escaping, or attempting to leave or escape from the reserve or community without lawful permission or excuse; committing 'an offence against discipline' where this includes being 'idle, careless, or negligent at work or without just excuse', refusing to work or wilfully mismanaging his work; behaving in 'an offensive, threatening, insolent, insulting, disorderly, obscene, or indecent manner' or 'in any other way offending against the discipline or good order of the reserve or community.'

Mr. McInnes indicated further that, in terms of the Act and Regulations, the Director can order an assisted Aborigine or Islander not currently living on a reserve to do so and can, upon the recommendation of an Aboriginal or Island Court, order assisted Aborigines or Islanders to move from one reserve to another. In addition, the Act gives managers of reserves and district officers considerable power with regard to the management of property. For example, a district officer in Queensland is empowered to enter an islander's land and seize property or otherwise dispose of his property.

Mr. Tats also discussed Queensland legislation, emphasising the necessity to examine the reasons behind it and stressing that legislation discriminating 'for' can turn into legislation discriminating 'against'. Originally, Queensland legislation was designed to discriminate for the Aborigines and Islanders; it was designed to protect them from white settlers and their accompanying evils such as drink and prostitution, to help them adjust to the white man's ways, and to survive in the midst of a new culture.

Mr. Tats argued that this original system of protection has turned into a system of discrimination against, comparable to that existing in South Africa, with separate courts and gaols for Aborigines, restricted drinking rights, etc. He suggested that there was a need to expand the eroding quality of the reasons underlying this legislation, to determine whether the Aboriginal and Islander still needs to be protected from the white man, and whether he still needs help and guidance.

These talks therefore covered a wide range of topics while concentrating on Queensland conditions.

Reports from four surveys—housing, citizenship, employment, and education—were presented at the seminar.

HOUSING AND CITIZENSHIP

Housing standards were found to be far higher than expected and the housing sub-committee reported that of 20 houses selected at random, five could be arbitrarily classified as "good", three as "shockingly poor", and the rest as somewhere in between.

Perhaps the most significant finding from this survey related to the correlation between the standard of dwelling and the rent paid for it, as the standard of dwelling lowered, rent rose. In addition it was found that the number of persons in a dwelling varied from two to thirteen, with an average of eight. Six families had either another family or a relative, not of the immediate family, living with them.

The citizenship group, while stressing the need for greater European understanding of coloured people as well as the need to help coloured persons gain understanding of the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship, came to the conclusion that a policy of assimilation was probably desirable for the coloured people of Townsville. However, they also pointed out that many of the older Aborigines and Islanders do not want to be left alone, while teenagers were beginning to form their own culture and no longer identify with other minority groups such as Negroes and Maoris.

White society seems to demand that an Aborigine "prove" himself before he is accepted; that in a pub or in his place of employment he has to attain a certain standard of conduct higher than that required of a white man. This however does not necessarily apply to Torres Strait Islanders because of the different way that they have reacted to, and been accepted by, white society.

To quote the citizenship report, "The Torres Strait Islanders is a fairly recent arrival in our Society being attracted to North Queensland, Australia and other areas because of the diminishing opportunities for work on the islands and other regions. He is a fairly independent and proud individual who has shown that integration is not a real problem in terms of steady employment in manual spheres. He knows and understands his background and is proud of it. . . . In contrast, the Aboriginal half-caste who has been experiencing white society for several generations belongs to no-one. He has no personal experience of tribal life except perhaps a little on Palm Island, where he may have been brought up in a protective society. Continually we see dirty and overcrowded homes and irregular work patterns which give rise to a hardening of attitudes on the part of white citizens."

EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

The employment survey found that whereas in 1954 the unemployment rates were employed, Island males seemed to have no difficulty in finding work. Most of those who were unemployed were Aborigines or Islanders, were doing unskilled work. Of the women 44% of the Islanders and 71% of the Aborigines were unemployed.

One reason for this disparity could be that 1216% of the Island women had received approved training in some skill while only one Aborigine had such training. Of the men none had received approved training though 406% of the Islanders and 22% of the Aborigines had unapproved training in skills such as carpentry.

Unfortunately the education survey group was unable to conduct any independent research and its report consisted of a summary of the findings of other workers in this field. Its members discussed the disadvantages of the physical conditions of many Aboriginal homes, the effect of the differing value systems of Aborigines and Europeans (e.g. Europeans tend to stress individualism and competition while minority groups such as Aborigines tend to stress cooperation and "close knittedness"), and the consequence of these values for any Aboriginal child who does well at school and thereby is likely to cut himself off from his fellows.

VALUE OF SURVEYS

Of these four research sub-groups then, two performed actual surveys and two dealt with more abstract concepts. With regard to the surveys, one (township occupation) must be added. Twenty houses were surveyed, a very small number, but it is considered that the total Aboriginal and Island population is thought to be about eight hundred, and in the employment survey, 33% of the Aboriginal males have bad unused forms.

However, the employment survey did bring out some important points. For example why was there such a large number?
of unemployed Aboriginal and Island girls! Although very few had any approved training, 50% of them had grade 10 or 11, and 68% of the Aborigines had Grade Eight education or higher, while 73% of the Island girls had done Junior. These figures indicate possible employer discrimination particularly in the overcrowd industries.

The employment survey also highlighted the fact that Trade Training undertaken at Palm Island by the Aboriginal and Island boys is not acceptable on the mainland, and therefore is practically useless outside the reserve.

The education group intends to do further research which could prove worthwhile as it is likely that findings evolved from studies of some Aboriginal groups may not hold true for others. For example the idea that a child who does well at school will tend to be rejected by the rest of the group may have to be modified. A attitude found amongst some reserve Aborigines indicates that parents and other relatives will not push the children by forcing them to go to school every day and do their home-work, but if they manage to do well will be pleased by their performance. In addition, very little work has been done on Islander, as distinct from Aboriginal education, and there is a definite need for some research in this direction.

The citizenship group modified their assimilation viewpoint by recognizing that our way of life is not necessarily the best, nor particularly desired by a number of old people and teenagers, but they failed to stress a concept which was mentioned by Mr. Tate in his talk, and is gaining more and more credence when considering the future of aborigines. This is the idea that the white people must ask the Aborigines and Islanders what they want for the future and how they want to live, and then let them decide on the aways, the ways, and the wherethes of our future.

ABORIGINES PARTICIPATE.

The informal discussion groups proved to be one of the most valuable aspects of the seminar, largely because of the presence of a large number of Aborigines and Islanders, including a coachload from Yarrabah, a reserve near Cairns.

Seminar participants broke up into groups of about eight to ten people after each paper, and groups were arranged so that they were either similarly coloured or predominantly European. At first this seemed to cause problems with the basic theme of the seminar but it proved to be valuable that those Aborigines and Islanders in predominantly coloured groups tended to speak openly about their needs and the problems affecting them. When the seminar reassembled each group leader gave brief reports on what their group had discussed.

The problems of the reserve Aborigines tended to come to the fore in these reports mainly because of the large number of Yarrabah people present. They talked of the low wages a person working on the reserve received, and reported earnings of eight to ten dollars a week plus rations. They discussed also the feeling of insecurity resulting from living on land which could be taken from them at any time, how they would like to own their own land, and perhaps set up co-operatives, particularly in the pearling industry.

PALM ISLANDERS ABSENT.

Thus the reports of the discussion groups provided the Europeans with greater insight into the needs and problems of the Aborigines and Islanders and demonstrated the value of dialogue between Aborigines, Islanders, and Europeans. The presence of the Yarrabah people and the impotence of their contribution to the seminar made evident the absence of Palm Islanders. The Yarrabah people had had to travel 12 miles by boat to Cairns and then, by charter bus, 245 miles to Townsville. Palm Island, on the other hand, lies 40 miles off the coast of Townsville - a four hour boat trip.

No-one seemed to be able to answer the question of why Palm Islanders were absent from the seminar. It was suggested on one hand that the originally proposed community backing of the seminar had led to lack of support, and on the other hand that the originally proposed seminar did not fit in with the seminar timetable. Whatever the reason, it seems that a great opportunity was lost to foster much needed interaction between Townsville and Palm Island people was missed. To date interaction has been minimal. Few whites ever go to Palm Island and the movement of Palm Islanders to Townsville is restricted, both because the bus can only carry a limited number of passengers and also because an Aborigine or Islander must ask permission to leave the island.

Subsequent evidence indicates clearly that the reason the Palm Island Aborigines did not attend the seminar was that they had refused permission to do so by the government authorities on the island.

The absence of Palm Islanders therefore does not seem to be in line with the Department's stated policy of assimilation. For, "Departmental policy remains directed towards assimilation without loss of identity and ensuring that all Aboriginal families attain the same manner of living as other Australians." ("Annual Report Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, 1967").

EQUIL RIGHTS DEMANDED.

Towards the end of the seminar several motions were passed. These included recommendations that the Queensland government make discrimination illegal as in South Australia, that royalties from mining concerns on Aboriginal reserves be placed in a fund for Aborigines, and that Aborigines and Islanders be granted equal wage status with Europeans.

It was also recommended by the meeting that an Act, similar to the Repatriation Act for returned servicemen, be set up to provide more money for the education of Aborigines and Islanders, to provide a "soldier's settlement" type of land scheme, and to provide finance for home and business owners. Finally a committee was suggested to continue the work initiated by the seminar.

Overall perhaps the seminar's significance for North Queensland lay in its contribution to reciprocal understanding between European and coloured. Many Europeans found the seminar met and talked with more Aborigines and Islanders than they ever had before, and through this began to understand them, to make them not just need to be helped, they need to be listened to, they need to have their culture respected, they need to be able to run their lives as they wish and not as benighted Europeans think they should.

And on the other hand perhaps Aborigines and Islanders came to appreciate what it was that some Europeans were trying to do. It was through this mutual understanding that the seminar became unified and progressed. Only in the same way will equal rights come.

Kinship and Conflict

A study of an Aboriginal Community in Northern Arnhem Land

L. R. Haflf

This is a detailed study of a group of Aborigines who only recently abandoned their nomadic existence to live on a government settlement. It will therefore be among the last firsthand accounts of traditional Aboriginal society. The author's systematic analysis of disputes reveals the true complexity and unparalleled logical development of Aboriginal kinship systems, at the same time demonstrating that there is still much that can and should be discovered.

Until this study appeared far more was known about the formal organisation of Aboriginal society than about clashes of interest within. A better knowledge of the second subject might have prevented misunderstandings about the first.

1965, cxvi + 162 pp., 5 maps, 28 fips, 18 tables, cloth, 22 cm, $4.50

For a complete List of Books in Print write to:

AUSTRLIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY PRESS, P.O. Box 4, Canberra, A.C.T. 2600.
THE PERKINS PROPOSALS

Charles Perkins, of the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs, sent the following recommendations to Mr. Harold Holt, at Mr. Holt’s request, from Dublin last year, before Mr. Holt’s tragic death. Mr. Perkins writes: The lack of elaboration in my submission is due to two factors. One is the note of urgency with which the material was compiled. Secondly, most of my technical data had already been furnished to the Department.

The principles and views expressed are the ones I which consider relevant to the Aboriginal Australian situation. They are my opinions alone and not a reflection of any organization to which I belong.

(a) EMPLOYMENT

The importance. Many of the problems associated with the assimilation or integration of Aboriginals into Australian society stem from this aspect. Many Aboriginals are unemployed and/or unemployable due to lack of skilled training and/or education-social and scholastic. It is often claimed that Aboriginals do not want work. This is, of course, not true. It is merely the absence of conditions mentioned that prevent them from obtaining employment or remaining employed once obtained.

All of the adult education facilities on Reserves, missions, or in the urban setting are unsuitable for the majority. They have no realistic or meaningful concepts of the possibilities or aims of the Aboriginal people. The Aboriginals need to be trained to accept employment and to live in the conditions of employment. Thousands will be ready and willing to move off Reserves and missions if they can, and with a chance and stimulus a population explosion on most Reserves at this moment. The majority of residents are tourists on Reserve life. They are completely unsuited for the urban setting which it is both a need and a responsibility to accept.

These are my proposals (1) Training centres both on and off Aboriginal settlements should be established in relevant areas, e.g., in major cities, where the Aboriginal and his family, if necessary, can accept skilled and social training. I emphasize skilled training at this point. Education in the social and scholastic field can be examined under the education survey. In these training centres the Adult Aboriginal can undergo classes in most areas of trade and industry, e.g., welding, electronics, mechanics, carpentry, etc. This must be under the supervision of qualified and experienced teachers. This will result in a more healthy and well-balanced society.

Employment must then be found in an acceptable area. Follow-up work must be organized to cater for problems arising after employment. The young person (15-18 years, male) could undergo some similar training if required. However, training should usually be in the form of an apprenticeship which would be suitable for example, sign-writing or music. This latter group can usually find suitable accommodation under the hostel scheme proposed in the education category.

Young women over the age of 16 years can be catered for in these training centres. Whether they be body builders or hairdressers is a matter for discussion. If the person in question is the wife of an adult under training, the health and home management should be more appropriate. Others may require the training of secretaries, typists or teaching in the field of teaching. Personal or community type of motivation of motivation should be the compulsory course for women - apart from other training given.

(b) Urban employment Centres.

These can operate under the jurisdiction of welfare agencies - voluntary, governmental - e.g., the Foundation for Aboriginal Welfare Board of New South Wales - Governmental institutions already in existence, e.g., the Commonwealth Employment Office.

The welfare agency can find suitable employment for Aboriginals already living in the urban areas. This can be done through their own liaison with employers.

The welfare agency can recommend that the individual undergo some basic training at the nearest training centre to obtain some skill enabling employment to be accepted.

The Government institution can accept Aboriginals as presented, or as recommended, and organize employment through the welfare agency.

To conclude Employment, a number of points must be stressed:

1. Aboriginals must be trained to accept employment. Employment opportunities mean nothing if an individual is unable to accept positions through lack of skilled training.

2. Training centres must be located on Reserves, missions or urban areas and have a central control maintained over standards.

3. Employment is the major factor to be considered in finding some solution to the complex Aboriginal problem in Australia today. Relocation seems a necessity in certain areas, e.g., Northern Territory.

(c) EDUCATION

No one denies the value of a good education. The lack of education is in its broad sense, is one of the main factors contributing to the state of the Aboriginals in Australia. Education gives one the chance for independence of movement in any society, freedom of choice between pastimes and greater possibilities for one’s children. This has not been the case with Aboriginals. Usually other people have made decisions for them. As a consequence, their self-confidence has never really matured.

This lack of education has been the cause of the hostility with which the Aboriginal has entered the mainstream of Australian society. It has led to lack of interest or biological inability but merely the education system has been faulted. I therefore suggest that an Aboriginal Education Foundation should provide:

(1) Free education for any person of Aboriginal descent. This education should begin in the pre-school level and go up to university and beyond if necessary. This Foundation should receive relevant guide lines from the already established Education Foundations, e.g., the Macquarie Education Foundation in New Zealand, and its counterparts in Canada and the USA.

This Foundation should sponsor any Aboriginal, including adults, through any social, scholastic or trade course agreed on by the Foundation and the individuals concerned.

This Foundation must operate with existing educational facilities available.

(2) The Foundation should programme to educate the general public (including the media) in the real question in Australia. All aspects of Aboriginal Society must be covered, e.g., churches, schools, trade unions, lodges. Programmes must be well planned. Actual situations must be revealed, analyzed and explained given. Misleading propaganda, such as is published at the present time, must cease. This will enable the general public (including Aboriginals) to realize the urgency of the question and the need for change.

(3) Sufficient finance should be allocated to the Foundation to enable implementation of suggested programmes. This includes support of a full-time national administrative staff and moneys for scholastic equipment.

(4) Hostels should be organized in relevant areas where such organisations and/or young working Aboriginals can be transferred to. These hostels should be for male or female - mostly young people. Similar Church hostels can be assisted by providing a strong nucleus but the Church does not inhibit Aboriginal freedom of movement or choice. (These hostels are for young people as the problem begins to change for the better, there will be less need for hostels.)

(5) Training centres could be utilized by the Foundation. This is merely a question of organization.

In conclusion on Education, I suggest the Foundation be only one segment of the Federal Aboriginal Affairs Bureau. I must add that education is not the key to any solution. It is only a very important key which may be considered apart from other social factors. A sub-standard physical environment will not allow complete and acceptable education to come to Aboriginals - adults included - demands a full range of educational facilities.

(d) HOUSING

The Aboriginal Affairs Bureau should play a major role in the arrangement of the housing of Aboriginal people. Indicative of much in housing programmes of the Bureau should be designed to include consultation of local and national housing proposals before any consideration be undertaken about any housing proposal pertaining to themselves or the group as a whole. Settlement housing should not be in rows or confined in a small area. Dwellings should be up to general community standards. The concept of transitional housing should be eliminated. In its place should be a better standard of housing with suitable training and selection of prospective tenants.

(e) SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY

A survey should be immediately undertaken throughout Australia with two broad objectives:

(1) To compile statistics on the Aboriginal population of Australia. This should include such matters as numbers, population concentration, occupations, education level, attitudes, housing facilities and health. No comprehensive survey has ever been completed on the Aboriginal people in Australia.

(2) To provide the basis for all short or long-range programmes involving Aboriginals. At the present it is a case of the blind leading the blind. No one really knows how many Aboriginals there are or what conditions they are living under.

(f) LAND OWNERSHIP

The matter of past ownership of land is a very complicated one. The fact of the matter is unknown to all parties concerned. I feel however that this matter should be investigated thoroughly and arrangements made with the Aboriginals. This benefit must be collective to the Aborigines. I believe that this can be a recognition that Aboriginals originally had ownership of land in most areas of Australia. Compensation should then focus on this basis. Finance or justification for obtaining finance can be correlated with this principle.
Some provision should be made in the Federal Constitution to deal with discrimination. Racial discrimination against Aboriginals does exist. I do not imply that such a law will force a change of attitudes by the strongly prejudiced; nevertheless such a law would indicate to Aboriginals that the law of the nation can act on their behalf. This creates a sense of involvement in the country and a will to change. It stimulates a sense of dignity and respect for oneself, the law and others. They will feel they have a legal right to protest about any undue restriction of their freedom of participation in the general community.

There are still many areas in Australia where racial discrimination against Aboriginals is practised, for example in some restaurants, film theatres, residential places of employment, swimming pools, hotels and such. Thirdly such a law will indicate to the world that Australia intends to protect the right of all Aboriginals living in this society.

(4) HEALTH

(1) An immediate health check should be carried out on all Aboriginals. Contact should be made with the more remote people. An examination should be made on every individual and medical treatment given if warranted. There are many thousands of Aboriginals who have never been examined by a doctor. It would be beneficial to national health as well as to the Aboriginal people.

(2) A check should be made on the living conditions in areas where Aboriginals reside. This refers to existing Reserves, missions, cattle or sheep stations or various other settlements. The conditions of many areas are disgraceful and responsible for the poor health and high infant mortality rates among Aboriginals. No doubt mission, Reserve or settlement should continue which allows sub-standard living conditions. No Aboriginal family should be allowed to continue living in a situation which jeopardizes the health of members of the family or the rest of the general community.

Strict laws pertaining to standards of health and hygiene should be maintained whether the Aboriginal lives on a Reserve, mission tribe settlement or farm. The health of one family reflects on the social conscience of the nation and is a real threat to the health of others in the community.

Several aspects which I have not at this time given consideration to are namely matters which inevitably come under the jurisdiction of the Bureau. There would be for example protection and copyright of Aboriginal Arts and Crafts, promotion of Aboriginal culture, and Community Development on and off Reserves.

To conclude, it is obvious that much detail and technical classification is necessary on the proposals submitted. The points made are broad principles which could provide the focus for relevant programmes. There is a need in Australia now for a government-wide implementor programme for the rehabilitation of Aboriginal people in Australian Society and there is the greatest urgency about this.

This article has been reprinted from Quadraj, Jan - Feb 1968 by permission of Mr. Parkinson.

Alf Economy and Nurturer could grow up to be dignified men of the Pitiynjijara, tribe... or will they be fringe dwellers on the edge of white society?... Photo by courtesy of P&W Wallace Collection, State Library of South Aust.

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edited by Louise Rorabahe

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The Whitefella Problem

by Noel M Wallace

My first introduction to the Abschati people who migrated from the traditional land of the North-West Aboriginal Reserve was, according to my journal, Monday, 22nd May 1971, when I first stepped from the biggest boghole that Central Austra would provide, 20 miles s.e. of Munga Park. Our next meeting was at Murgapea River when I saw this cross-section of Australian university personnel working and living in unfamiliar surroundings - and it was here I was to know that young people wanted to know more about, and to help the Aboriginal people. I wondered what questions they would ask when they got back to the big cities - how they thought what would they do... I have read several articles written by some of these people, and perhaps I may be permitted to make some observations - from one who makes no claims as an expert in one field or another, but as a human being who is proud to have amongst his friends quite a number of people of the Pitiynjijara Tribe.

My wife and I have camped with them; hunted with them; we have been shown the women's secret ceremonies and the men have taken me with them and shown me their sacred places, their story boards, told us their sitting stories and have sung their songs. I was present by invitation of my friends at initiation ceremonies.

TRIBA DIFFERENCES

We can see no clear-cut, clean, stereotype pigeon-holed answer to the 'Aboriginal problem.' Our only claim is to have a fair knowledge of the problem - and this from the other side. Our friends have a 'white fella problem.' the problem of trying to live in a white people's world, and those young people who have to try to solve these problems, we say, please look at the problems from their side - get facts, facts, and more facts, and discard the rabish that is perpetually spoken and published about these people - and if you solve a problem for the Aboriginal people in Australia, don't think that that answer necessarily applies to the Pitiynjijara people or the Walpiri people or the Aranda people, because that is what they are, People! Individuals!

When someone says, 'I have talked to them and I know what they want,' ask 'Who did you talk to - young men, young women? What do the old people think? What matters was the group you were talking to - if they were Kymara, what do the Pinalu people think? If a man says that it is all right to cut down that tree, don't ask them the same for a road, stop and think. Perhaps your informant is Kanyalu totem and that place is no place to honour, to support, to revere, to give a place sacred to Kalya people. The more that you learn the more complex the problems become.

POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS

Let us now examine some of theelementary mistakes and misconceptions that arise through a lack of knowledge.

'They are lazy'

I have seen Munjilari carry a 40 lb. euro on his head for 5 miles; women spend all day digging out rabbits with their pig (digging dish) - and dig as just vigorously to get our car out of a bog; men ride in the car - country say, 'You stop now, bad ahead.' - and get out and trail out ahead. They usually are clear, practicing the path of rocks and fallen mulga for 3 or 4 miles without stopping for a rest. They are not lazy when they work, they are not lazy when they do a job that we see no necessity in doing. So am I.

'They can't be taught responsibility'

They don't have to be taught responsibility when they feel that it is necessary. Discipline, in their community, is absolute. They have no discipline, problem children, starvation of some whilst others have plenty. Their sense of responsibility

In things that matter to them is fully developed.

'They are so primitive'

What is your definition of 'primitive'? I think that my saying is that they were so primitive that they didn't have the intelligence to enable them to find food and water, to live as a communality and have nothing to do with the way of life. Why have they not 'evolved' to our type of civilization? The answer is simple - the primitive country would not let them. Look around. There is not much that has been added to it. It is native to Australia. No grain. No meat. People say, 'But they didn't even have the intelligence to plant a seed.' No. Our Pitiynjijara friends had the intelligence not to - their ways of gathering seed, leaves, plenty behind for the next rain. next week...next month...next year. whenever it may come. I am afraid that I have been forced to reply to a rather fascinating question at a lecture, about their lack of a national bank. "The Mabula tribe you ever tried to milk a kangaroo?" 'They eat everything now and keep anything until tomorrow.

On hunting trips with the men, we have shot and cooked many kangaroos and euro, and cooked them in the open. We dug for tuber and taken back to camp to be shared with others. Added to this, there are always more hungry people than there is food, and even if there were a surplus of food, we would find that this large amount of money is being spent on schools and equipment; there are no men toGUIDE them. There are dozens more examples. Look for them and you will soon become aware of them.

In SEARCH OF SOLUTIONS

It is most unfortunate, but true, that various authorities disagree with other authorities regarding the methods to be used in trying to find answers to so many problems. People have not seen each other - who are trying to do their best for the Aboriginal people, but instead of getting together, sharing knowledge and experience, they dismiss the people with whose ideas they differ as having their own as a joke or a wrong. If you were to visit some of the Northern Territory missions, you would find that not only large amounts of money are being spent on schools and equipment; there are no guides. We respect education, and there are literally hundreds of transitional houses being occupied and cared for by native people. Our plea is for cooperation between Commonwealth, State, and Missions with just the one end in view. The Aboriginal people are worth the effort.

When my wife and I visit these people in their country, away from settlements and missions, they are gracious, thoughtful and courteous hosts. They know that our lives literally depend on them; they are proud of their skills, and anxious to teach us.

If some of you who read this are really interested in our Aboriginal friends, go and visit them. You will know them, you will have a new look down with them in their own environment, and learn some of their language. They will always be polite to you. Treat them with respect - they will be your friends if you genuinely care enough to get to know them, and to show them that you care.

Then you will share with us the feeling that comes when one, one day, say to yourself, 'You know, I am so glad that you share your first inns (whitefella word 'Corroborree') with them.'
The Federal Council is an association which brings together organisations throughout Australia who are working for the rights and advancement of Aborigines. It has no political allegiance.

Some of the objectives of the Federal Council are:
The fostering of mutual understanding and respect between Aborigines and other Australians; The encouragement of community development projects and other business enterprises, particularly through self-help, to enable economic independence; The opportunity to acquire housing of the same standard enjoyed by the Australian community in general; The provision of proper facilities throughout the education field; The development and appreciation of indigenous culture throughout Australia.

Since its formation in 1958, the Federal Council has helped to achieve considerable gains in the legislative and administrative benefits, employment opportunities, wages and land rights.

Legislative Reform:
More changes have occurred in Aboriginal legislation throughout the Commonwealth since 1958 than in the previous 50 years.

Social Services:
Although the Social Services Act was liberalised in 1961, many Aborigines are still denied social services.

Extension of Franchise:
Aborigines now have the right to vote in all Federal and State electorates. (Federal: 1962; Western Australia: 1963; Northern Territory: 1962; Queensland: 1965).

Land Trust Bill:
In 1966 the Federal Council supported the passing of the Public Trusts (Aborigines) Land Trust Bill in South Australia which provides for the setting up of an Aboriginal Land Trust.

The Federal Council was responsible for collecting about 130,000 signatures on petitions to the Federal Government calling for a referendum to amend the two sections of the Constitution which discriminated against Aborigines. Subsequently the Council introduced legislation to amend these sections, and on May 27th, 1967, Australians overwhelmingly voted yes on the Aboriginal rights question.

Wages and Employment:
Continuous campaigns have kept the economic position of Aborigines before the public. Many trade unions concerned with awards excluding Aborigines have taken action in an endeavour to correct these injustices. The Government, before and during the Arbitration Commission's hearing of the case for Federal wages for Aborigines in the Northern Territory, when the Commission handed down its decision in March 1966, it stated that Aborigines worked in the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory would receive equal wages, but they only after a period of nearly three years. Soon after the decision, Aboriginal stockmen came out on strike, demanding "equal wages now." This strike action had the support of the Federal Council.

Land and Reserves:
The Federal Council played a major role in creating the circumstances under which the Commonwealth Parliament will be appointed to investigate the case of the Yirrkala (N.T.) Aborigines, whose land was taken for mining without consultation with them.

Employment Opportunities:
The Federal Council would like to see implemented by the Commonwealth Government a scheme similar to the ex-servicemen's rehabilitation scheme for the training of Aborigines in trades in skills. The B.H.P. Co. Ltd. has trained 50 Aborigine employees at its Groote Eylandt settlement. All these men on equal terms with white workers. B.H.P. has shown that Aboriginal labour can be successfully integrated with white labour.

In summary, the Aborigines have been winning important gains over the years and the indications are that these gains are likely to continue. Aborigines, as in the past, are working hard to achieve their goals and many more improvements are likely to be seen in the future.

SOCIETY IN TRANSITION

THE WIND OF CHANGE IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA:

F G G Rose

Academic-Verlag, Berlin

Pp 234. Approximatley $15.00

Reviewed by: Frank Stevens, Department of Economic History, ANU

Many reasons have been presented as to why Aborigines have failed to achieve standards of living similar to Europeans of our own region. These have ranged from geographical difficulties to plain laziness. The overwhelming weight of scientific evidence demonstrates that neither of these assumptions are valid and yet it is surprising how many Australians, considering themselves educated, adhere to such viewpoints.

One basic reason why prejudice lingers on in a community is that the unitary nature of most racial groups. Where there is racial mobility, both through internal migration and economic opportunity, opinions concerning racial differences become less important and the common interests of humanity replace more divisive considerations. Research indicates that prejudice is based on ignorance which is in turn promoted by lack of understanding of the reasons for the prejudice which presently seems to be maintained by the administrators of Australia's assimilation programme.

Assimilation, perhaps, along the lines of a materialist interpretation of ethnography, Rose quickly sketches over the fields of pro- and anti-immigration, towards anthropologists, to concentrate on the present processes of adjustment of the still semi-soothed groups which has gathered around the fashionable European tourist centre of Alice Springs.

SOCIAL ADJUSTMENTS

If one describes in some detail the fundamental change in the basis of Aboriginal society which has forced the original indigenous tribes to come to terms with selected centres of European contact in which the considerations of livelihood have changed from a subsistence basis to gathering to a limited form of barter and trade, bearing with it an increasing dependence on a money economy.

Of particular interest to students of North East Australia Rose presents with great detail and disturbing accuracy the fundamental consideration of the attraction of Aborigines to the industrial system which has been designed for them in the Northern Territory and the manner in which the employee uses it to his own advantage whilst presenting an opportunity for exploitation by employers of various kinds.

The changing basis of economic relations, he claims, has had fundamental implications for the organisation of Aboriginal society which has not only changed the kinship ties, but also family life and the processes of authority in general.

Note is also made of the persistence of Aboriginal beliefs and cults amongst a group which has undergone a complete revolution in its traditional structure. The strength of Aboriginal culture in this respect has been frequently commented on by other authoritative writers but still seems to have little consequence in the official programmes of assimilation which have been mapped out for these people.

The development of a New Guinea type cargo cult amongst the younger generation of Aborigines also attracted the author's attention although the grounds for the development of such practices were not convincingly presented. These features of the mental situation are much more important than the attention of other scholars at a later date.

If one is able to concede, initially, that the materialist framework of Rose's study is a valid method of analysis, then it is necessary to conclude that this book is a work of significance in a field which in all has been too frequently neglected in Australia.

Given the possibility that some Australian publisher will find room for it in his collection although the length and weight of it may, in the present state of production, make the production of an edited version.