

HOW AN ABORIGINE SEES THINGS

By Tom McKenzie, of Kangaroo Valley.
(A Reply to Mrs. Norah J. C. Foster.)

Most Aboriginal readers of *Dawn* (May issue) will agree with many remarks made by Ex-Matron Norah J. C. Foster and appreciate her desire to promote a better understanding between aborigine people and white people.



As an Aborigine employed on a dairy farm in Kangaroo Valley I agree that many white people accept our friendship and take us into their homes. Although I am the only Aborigine here at present, I have made friends with whom I spend my spare time swimming, riding, shooting or going to the pictures.

We must all agree that people white or dark did not choose their colour nor place of birth and all should strive to remove racial prejudice on either side.

However, if we are going to achieve this we should try and get a real picture of the facts and then see how we can correct any injustice.

Mrs. Foster raises several points with which I cannot agree. She states that, "except concerning the matter of drink (and this is covered by Exemption Certificates) they do have the same rights."

Here Mrs. Foster overlooks a question that I know is responsible for much ill-feeling among many aborigines. That is the question of separation in picture theatres in most large country towns where I have been. It does not appear where I now live though.

If anyone attends a picture theatre unclean or offensive they should be refused admittance, whether they are white or dark, so they cannot offend someone who has paid for an evening's entertainment. However, in many country towns aborigines are forced to sit in a separate part of the theatre irrespective of how clean or well behaved they are. This is a straight-out colour bar.

Surely Mrs. Foster has also heard of this question arising over the use of swimming pools in many large country centres? It also received wide publicity recently over the use of a council hall in a large country town for the wedding of an Aborigine couple.

Although I do not drink, and have no desire to, I feel that there is no need for a special law dealing with colour or race.

If a white person is objectionable, a hotel keeper can refuse to serve him and have a prohibition order made against him. That same law could be applied to aborigines.

I know of cases where this law has embarrassed both aborigines and whites. An aborigine friend who is a good footballer told me how he felt after a match when his white mates would like to have a drink of beer but would not like to leave him by himself while they went and had one.

I agree with Mrs. Foster's advice on thrift. We should all save as much as we can, but I doubt if staying home from the pictures would get me the Holden car I'd like. It costs me 3s. 6d. per week to see a picture show and since the recent rise in the price of these cars I believe they cost well over £1,000.

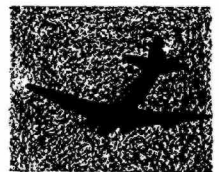
Mrs. Foster lists some of the things that white people have given us and asks, "What have you given us?"

We can reply that our forefathers gave you a lovely country which God had given to them. For countless ages it nourished our people in sunshine and health. They were carefree and happy without the roar of trains, the rattle of trams and all the mad rushing that drives so many to drink or into mental homes which our people did not need.

History also records many cases of explorers being helped by the aborigines who showed them how to find water in the dry inland.

Mrs. Foster refers to aborigines who spend their money on taxis, pictures and drink. She must agree that this is not confined solely to aborigines. If we pick up any daily paper we read of white people committing every crime from murder to stealing.

White people have invented machines that will move faster than sound, but they have also invented the atom bomb that will blow up whole cities, killing guilty and innocent alike.



In the first half of this century they have either been at war or in constant fear of war. In two world wars whole countries were laid waste and millions and millions lost their lives.

However, civilisation is here to stay and I join Mrs. Foster in urging aborigines with a "chip on their shoulder" to get rid of it. We should all strive to improve our way of living and people white and dark should have one thing in common and work together to make this a better peaceful world.