

could well involve the economic development of Aboriginal Stations and Reserves);

- (B) A longer period of working on jobs established for the purpose of learning simple skills; and
- (C) A period of on-the-job **training** in private employment, with salaries going from half, to full apprenticeship rates.

This scheme is supplemented by one of educational aids which is of direct value in a work-training scheme. The aids include remedial reading, home visits by teachers, curriculum planning to suit low income students and homework helpers to take the place of parents handicapped by their own lack of initiative and education. Programme teaching techniques are to be instituted to help full-grown youths learn the skills of literacy. It is estimated it will take three months to two years for any level to be attained.

In the work-training camps there will be one counsellor for every fifteen campers. This is a very different ratio to our own, in the distribution of welfare workers.

- (ii) Equal chances in education. Because of the difficulty in overcoming the gap which develops in language skills and reading by the end of the third year of primary education, several cities taking part in the United States' "Great Cities School Improvement Programme" have chosen to concentrate on the first three or four years of primary schooling.

This is based on the well confirmed high correlation between the socio-economic background of children with their intelligence and achievements. It has been shown that both **intelligence and achievement** can be favourably affected through carefully planned equal educational opportunities.¹ Nothing could be more pertinent to Aboriginal policy making than this kind of research and programme. Its assumptions have been tested and examined by Dr. Martin Deutsch of the N.S.W. Medical College Department of Psychiatry.

The disabilities of children from the lowest social and economic groups are summarised roughly as follows:

- (A) No lack of experiences, but little help in integrating them and in being made aware of similarities, and differences.
- (B) Lack the usual middle class verbalisations, that is, ability

1 New Society, 2nd September, 1965, p.21-2.

to express themselves, and to understand the words used in lessons.

- (C) Little experience in listening, and a short attention span, due to growing up in warrens of overcrowded rooms, and conversations in which they do not participate.
- (D) These children often miss out on kindergarten because of the expense and difficulty to their parents, coupled with the parents' lack of interest.
- (E) They are accustomed to less real language (as against shrugs and gestures) as means of communication.

A classroom situation has been expertly designed to compensate for these disabilities. The idea of the scheme is: "if these children are to be a part of a modern industrial country, they must be employable, and able to feel that they too can be successful. Brains and hard work are no longer a substitute for brains and saleable skills. Children must be given the chance to be academically successful, for this is now the real prerequisite to training, education and jobs. Let's give them the background to this success."¹

(d) Laws against Discrimination.

(i) Social discrimination has become an issue in Great Britain as well as the United States.² The entire history of the American Civil Rights legislation demonstrates that the law can greatly influence moral attitudes, and resulting social conduct.

A Racial Discrimination and Incitement Act would have such an effect, even if seldom invoked. One may be sure that it would be seldom invoked except where the offence is serious and the prosecution had proof of guilt, beyond all reasonable doubt. The main effect of such an Act would be to modify strong racial disapproval in an area where the existing law is inadequate. It must be emphasized that British law is inadequate. The law knows no distinction of race between one citizen and another, but it does nothing to remove discrimination even if it does not create it.

Both statute and common law are directed to the preservation of public order and the suppression of violence. While violation of the

1 New Society, 2nd September, 1965, p.22.

2 Ibid, 3rd December, 1964, p.9.

duties of an innkeeper to travellers could theoretically invoke legal action (which would apply to the refusal to serve Aborigines in hotels), in all other areas of life, employment, housing and places of amusement and recreation go unregulated, as does racist incitement. But racial discrimination does exist in this state, in all of these areas.

We require a statutory body concerned with discriminatory practices, as part of a whole legislative programme. The Committee would do well to investigate the legal activity in this area, undertaken in the United States, Great Britain and South Australia.

(ii) Inner City Housing.¹ The British work discussed in the journal focuses the issues involved in facing up to the "zones of stagnation" inhabited by Sydney Aborigines. The question of whether there is racial discrimination in the process of acquiring houses, what kinds of situations they are placed in with respect to rent and amenities is important. Does a New Australian who secures a large old house with a short period of lease to run, setting a pattern of multi-occupation and intimidation of Aboriginal tenants, as has been reported by the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs, thereby set the pattern for an unfavourable social situation?

Such investigations must be pursued, and would mean the recognition of Aboriginal problems quite outside the stations and reserves. It would require going beyond statistics and administrative work, to all kinds of family situations, which would have to be examined for patterns so as to enable an assessment of how well the various welfare agencies and measures can be expected to help. It would mean also, an examination of the patterns of social intercourse existing in towns, and the extent of Aboriginal participation in the town's social life, and an endeavour to increase and enrich it. Only then will the government's policy of "assimilation" be truly realized.

(e) "Repatriation".

In the long run, the kind of provision that may be necessary for the Aborigines may need to move from the traditional protective legislation, (that is still with us in the special police rights and drinking laws that apply on Stations, and nowhere else), to something more akin to the kind of provision made for the repatriation of ex-servicement after World War II.

1 Ibid, 12th August, 1965, p.13.

The main features of this were, of course, full-time re-establishment courses with emphasis on vocational preparation and qualifications, and assistance in obtaining accommodation and land.

Re-establishment benefits administered by the repatriation commission, relevant to Aborigines, include:

- (A) The provision of tools of trade and equipment, where necessary to the individual's employment.
- (B) Re-establishment loans to enable individuals to establish themselves in business practices, on the land, or in a trade.
- (C) Advances to meet the transportation expenses when an individual takes up training, employment, a business, or settlement on the land.

Perhaps the most significant and relevant since the Aborigines are predominantly rural dwellers, are the provisions of the War Services Fund Settlement Act 1945. It is significant that only about 5.5% of the expenditure on such provision went to administrative costs in the year 1953-4, while at present some 49% of the Aboriginal Welfare Board expenditure is used in administrative costs.

(4) The significance of the suggested programmes (and their cost to the taxpayer), cannot be ignored if this state is to make a positive and radically modern approach to the problems of Aborigines. **Instead of treating Aborigines as problems, let our Government rather adopt the attitude that they are human beings, susceptible to training, employment and social participation in the Australian community, if genuine and (initially) expensive community planning is enacted.** It is not only a debt owed to the Aborigines after a century and a half of subsistence provision, but an exciting experiment in the improvement of human relations, and race relations.

According to a noted critic of Australia's Aboriginal policies,

W.E.H. Stanner,

Australian native policy is a curious mixture of high intention, and laudable objectives; almost unbelievably mean finance; an incredibly bad local administration, and an obstinate concentration on lines of policy which one hundred and fifty years of experience have made suspect.¹

1 Dr. W.E.H. Stanner "Some Australians Take Stock" quoted by E.J.B. Foxcroft, Australian Native Policy, p.155.