

COLOUR PREJUDICE DIES

The Aboriginal is Accepted

It is pleasing to note that the breaking down of the antipathy of the white people to the aboriginal race continues. The general need for labour requires that white men and men of aboriginal blood work side by side, and this position has been accepted without question. Sporting organisations continue to accept aborigines as members, and in the Public and High Schools children of aboriginal blood have participated in the same sports and recreations as their white classmates. In many centres it is quite usual for aboriginal persons to attend social functions connected with Church and similar organisations and to be received without any distinction due to colour.

A complete assimilation demands, however, that the aboriginal concerned must be educated to take his place in the general social structure and learn to adapt himself to the customs and principles of the white man. For example, he must have acquired tolerance, a way of life calling for the habits of ordinary hygiene and a knowledge of the value of money, and the policy of the Board is directed to this end.

ABORIGINAL STATIONS

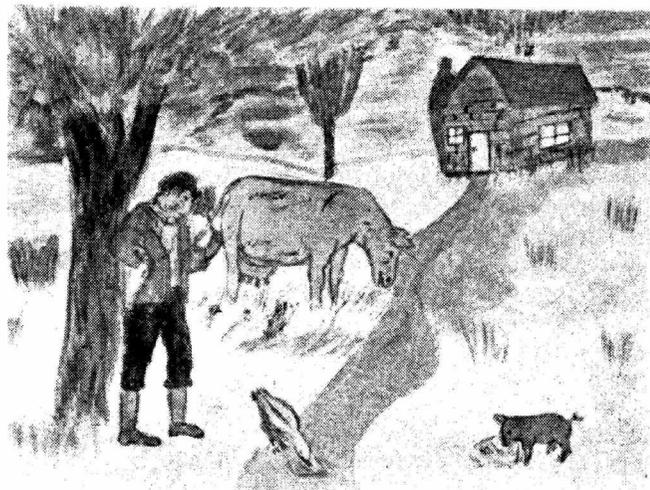
Now Modern Communities

At the end of last year the Board was maintaining twenty Aboriginal Stations. Two of these, however, Cumeroogunga and Pilliga, had reached the stage where the continuance of them as settlements under managerial supervision ceased to be economical, and it is proposed to close them as Stations as early as practicable.

The Aboriginal Stations are located on areas reserved for the exclusive use of aborigines and form community settlements. They have in charge, a Manager whose wife has the position of Matron. Many of these Matrons are trained and certificated nurses.

The Stations provide amenities for the residents which are not so readily available on other reserves or at other centres. These include school, medical treatment room and, in many instances, particularly where the Station has been newly established or rebuilt, a church and recreation hall. Each Station has its own water supply, except Cowra, which is connected to the town reservoir.

While the main purpose of the Aboriginal Station is to cater for those aborigines and their families who are unable to fend for themselves, it has been found that the acute housing situation which is existent throughout the State has compelled families to remain in residence on the Stations who, in ordinary circumstances, would be fit and proper persons to make their homes in the general community.



A real country scene as it appears to young Boggabilla artist, Valerie Binge.

THE ABORIGINES ARE HEALTHY

Good Reports from Stations

The reports received from the various Stations and Reserves indicate that the health of the aborigines throughout the State during the past year can be said to have been generally good. The organisation which exists on the Aboriginal Stations, and the constant visitations from the Board's Officers, provide a safeguard in the event of any serious outbreak of disease. The usual epidemics of colds, influenza and other seasonal diseases prevailed, but in every instance prompt remedial action was taken.

The health of the aborigines continues to be carefully watched. Where practicable, steps are taken to arrest any deficiencies. Strict supervision is maintained, particularly on the Aboriginal Stations, of the cleanliness of homes and sanitary conveniences. The impracticability of constant supervision of this nature on the Reserves, however, militates against a full implementation of the Board's aims. Nevertheless, in those districts where Welfare Officers are operating, marked improvements have been reported.

In the new homes, which have been provided since the War, facilities are provided for bathing. These were, unfortunately, absent in the older type of cottages, but in some instances community bathrooms have been erected and good use has been made of these.

As previously stated, aborigines requiring hospitalisation receive no different treatment to that afforded to members of the general community, but there is often present a feeling of isolation on the part of the aboriginal, which is not necessarily due to discrimination or unfair treatment; regular visits by the Board's Officers go a long way to overcome this state of affairs.