

GOODWILL AND COURAGE NEEDED

Pure Cultures Rare

By N. GIBSON, of Grafton

A firm supporter of freedom of speech, I believe those who use this privilege should be both accurate and explicit. And a privilege it certainly is, when the columns of *Dawn* are thrown open to a white man to express the opinions and use the phrases that Philip Foster gives us in his article, "We must Not Blink Facts." His article certainly makes us wonder what kind of people are chosen to manage our Aboriginal Stations, and I look forward to seeing some of them dissociate themselves from his views through your magazine.

In setting out to describe the white man's living standards, Mr. Foster implies that aborigines are not clean in their personal habits. That is the impression his words give. I can't argue about natives in a settlement or station. But I have seen those monuments to civilisation, the slums of Birmingham, London, Glasgow and Edinburgh—yes, and Sydney—where sanitation and water supply are inefficient, insufficient, or even absent, and overcrowding is normal; and here, since Mr. Foster wants facts, it is impossible for the average person to be clean, and next to impossible even to appear clean. It is also often impossible for him to be honest, because in the teeming slums of the world's big cities there is a jungle where the light of Mr. Foster's standards has never penetrated. In these places the ownership of property is often in the hands of extortionists who may not be technically dishonest, but are certainly greedy and inhuman.

We must be honest with our aborigines about our own society. The average white man does not own his own house till he is aged, and usually never owns his car, and he often gets a stomach ulcer or high blood pressure given away free with the time payment contract. I'm not decrying thrift, but Mr. Foster raised the question of facts, so let's have both sides.

Which brings us to bad language. Some of the finest people I know, both black and white, use bad language. Much of it is deeply rooted in our culture, and it is an aspect of the mother tongue which cannot be preached out of existence.

Mr. Foster surely has his tongue in his cheek when he speaks of the native culture. He must know how little the depredations of our ancestors have left of it. However, pure cultures are as rare as pure races (that is, non-existent) and I suppose the British culture is one of the greatest mixtures in history.

Happily, I don't think Mr. Foster's views will affect assimilation in the least. Races and cultures will mingle as inevitably as the kids will play with the family next door. Large numbers of both white and dark Australians are determined to know each other better; our dark friends should forget their shyness and make up their

minds not to be fobbed off with a "native culture" that no longer exists. Their only outlet from degradation and inferiority is to accept our way of life and measure up to it, to energetically adopt the white man's standards of thrift and cleanliness, and to live always within the law of the community. They will find friendly encouragement in many directions.

By all means let them cherish the remains of their own culture, and acquire the education to write it down and preserve it. But as a way of life it will not serve them—now. They must not be deceived into thinking they are either incompetent or unwanted in the community.

Aborigines must understand that the white man has many social problems of his own, and that as equal citizens they will inherit these as well as privileges. I am sure their resource, goodwill, courage and the social consciousness so evident in their tribal life, can be used in solving the problems of our society, and used from the very beginning of the process of assimilation.

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COUNTRY BABY SHOWS

Two baby shows took place in the Kempsey district during May. The first was the Aboriginal Baby Show held in the Showground, Kempsey, on Saturday, May 23rd where Bellbrook Babies took 3 prizes, namely:—

Best Dressed Girl—Josephine Quinlin, (16 months), a cute little girl dressed in lemon nylon, with matching shoes and socks.

6-9 Months Section—Richard Smith, a chubby little fellow.

2 Years Section—Wayne Quinlin, a sturdy youngster.

Bellbrook Mothers say thank you to Kempsey Apex Club and all willing helpers for such a good afternoon. The entertainment was much appreciated, particularly the free films.

Willawarrin Country Women's Association are to be congratulated too on an excellent Baby Show on Thursday, 28th May. They held a section for Aboriginal children and Bellbrook took off 6 prizes:—

Champion Baby—Richard Smith.

6-9 Months Section—Richard Smith.

Birth-3 Months Section—Paul Holton.

12-18 Months Section—Josephine Quinlin.

18 Months-2 Years Section—Wayne Quinlin.

Baby with Curliest Hair—Trevor Atkinson.

Bellbrook Mothers are very proud of their little ones and do appreciate the practical advice given by Sister G. Hook.