

# “Try Us”! “Try Us”! “Try Us”!

by

## Pastor Nichols

A plea for officialdom to give aborigines a chance to prove their ability to take their place in society was made by Pastor Doug. Nichols, M.B.E., in his address at the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon programme at Cummeragunga recently.

He charged the community with treating the “old Australians” with “apathy, paternalism and racial discrimination”.

Entitling his address “The Future of the Aborigine”, Pastor Nichols said his people were conscious of the great gap that had to be breached—a gap that had grown over a long period of years.

“Officialdom must accept a lot of the responsibility for its existence,” he continued.

He said officialdom had contributed to creation of the gap by looking on the aborigine with paternalism, rather than as a people who, given the opportunity, could become a people capable, industrious and fit to take their place in society.

“We are no different to you, given the opportunity, and we want our children to have the same chances as your children,” he told white members of his audience.

“Give them the chance to become a race of people competent and industrious and fit to take their place alongside you,” he continued.

“In World War One, you said, ‘Black man, can you fight?’ We replied, ‘Try us,’ and our fathers fought in France and Gallipoli. In World War Two, you again said, ‘Black man, can you fight?’ Again we replied, ‘Try us’ and the blood of the sons of those fathers who

fought in France and Gallipoli now sanctifies the Kokoda Trail in New Guinea, and other battle fields.”

“Now we are asking you to ‘try us’ again, and we are asking for equality,” Pastor Nichols continued.

He said the aborigines were bridging the gap, and wanted to forget the past.

“In looking to the future, however, we might well remind ourselves of the past, and ask ourselves some questions.”

“The aborigine wants to forget the past, and shake hands, for as Omar Khayyam wrote, ‘the moving finger writes, and having writ moves on’.”

Posing the question, “Where does the future lie?”, Pastor Nichols said, “There must be a change in the hearts and minds of the people of Australia to this, our people. There must be a determination and will to do something for this remnant people.”

He said he had listened with interest to a recent speech by a prominent statesman who had outlined the progress made in Australia in the past 150 years.

“Australia gave birth to a nation, and my people shared in the joy of celebrating that,” Pastor Nichols continued.

“I listened to that statesman remind us how Australia had turned the wheels of machinery; had made cultural progress; had cleared timber, built bridges, roads and railways.”

“He reminded us, too, of the number of New Australians who have been brought to our land and found employment, and urged us to accept them with friendship.”

“As he spoke, I reminded myself that with all its facilities for progress, Australia has not yet bridged the gulf of apathy to the Old Australian, whom he still treats with paternalism and racial discrimination,” Pastor Nichols said.

—(From the Riverine Herald).



Santa is having a bit of bother getting down the chimney

### Exploration of a Bora Field—continued

where the natives used to camp in wet spells—were not visited as time did not permit.

Sundown saw us back at the campsite where a lush grass covered green basin fringed by shady trees and flanked by a battlement of weather-carved sandstone gave an ideal setting for the final “cuppa” prior to out return to civilization and Grafton.

The Club would like to thank warmly their guide “Ian” who acted so very ably the part of cicerone for the day.

(See *Naturalists' Club*, page 21)