

Local Associations for The Welfare of Aborigines

In various towns throughout the State, associations have been formed with the object of providing assistance to Aborigines in housing, education, employment, maternal and baby welfare and of promoting the policy of assimilation by improving the attitude of white people to Aborigines and vice versa.

Several of the organisations functioned with marked success and rendered assistance of a most concrete nature towards betterment of the living conditions of Aborigines.

First inaugurated in 1956, the Armidale Association for the Assimilation of Aborigines continued to function purposefully. Its club for Aboriginal women met once a week to give instruction in sewing, cooking, domestic duties, hygiene and baby care. A baby health clinic, held once a fortnight, was well attended. Allied to this special work was the conduct of a kindergarten for pre-school children at which free milk was provided, the cost being met by the Board. Assisted by a loan of £1,200, made available by the Board, the Association completed the construction of a good type of house for a selected aboriginal family. During the year, this organisation also financed the cost involved in accommodating an aboriginal student at St. John's Church of England Hostel, Armidale, while attending the Armidale High School, thus bringing to three the number of those similarly assisted. In the employment sphere, the Association placed one youth in a Sydney training centre to undergo instruction in the leather trade. Three other Aboriginal youths were accommodated in Armidale, where positions were secured for them in various trades.

On land made available by the Dubbo Municipal Council a hostel was erected for use of Aboriginal patients attending Dubbo Base Hospital. The cost of construction was met by the Dubbo Apex Club and the Waterside Workers' Federation. The Board accepted responsibility for meeting maintenance costs and employing a caretaker.

An organisation was formed at Dareton under the name of the Sunraysia Aboriginal Welfare Group to improve living conditions of Aborigines in the district. Provided the Board can acquire a suitable area of land, the Group is prepared to meet the cost involved in the erection of simple type dwellings to accommodate adversely housed aborigines. The organisation is also desirous of securing a site in Dareton to establish a Welfare Centre for the instruction and care of underprivileged children residing in the area.

At Nambucca Heads the Davis Nambucca Heads Assimilation Fund was formed by local citizens to raise money to assist in the housing of Edric Davis and family. In addition to funds raised from private sources, the Board provided £500 by way of loan and the Davis family has now been settled in a comfortable, well-built home.

The Tamworth Association for Assimilation of Aborigines came into being during the year to investigate and inaugurate projects with the object of improving the present position in respect of housing, education, and the problems associated with employment and acceptance of Aborigines socially.

Similar organisations were formed at Condobolin, Coonamble, Coff's Harbour and Kempsey.

To stimulate interest in the formation of a co-operative at Woodenbong Aboriginal Station, a senior lecturer from the Armidale University visited the Station at fortnightly intervals to hold meetings and lecture the residents in the fundamentals involved.

The Board has taken steps to secure particulars of local associations of this type as it welcomes and desires their co-operation in the common field of endeavour on behalf of Aborigines. It would be grateful if the formation of any such associations, with particulars of their objects and names of office-bearers, were reported to the Board through the local Welfare Officer or direct to the Secretary, Aborigines' Welfare Board, Box 30, G.P.O., Sydney.

Establishment of Co-operative Societies

Under the control of the Australian Board of Missions, the Co-operative Fund for Australia and the Pacific made a survey of Cabbage Tree Island, Woodenbong and Tabulam Aboriginal Stations in connection with the proposed inauguration of co-operatives among Aboriginal communities. Following this exploratory step a five-day school on the subject was organised at the Tranby Hostel, Glebe, by the organisation mentioned, and attended by representatives from the above three Aboriginal Stations. An officer of the Registry of Co-operative Societies and Friendly Societies lectured on the principles of co-operation. At the moment, the Fund proposes to launch the first co-operative at Cabbage Tree Island Aboriginal Station.



This dour-looking young fellow is Victor Baker, of Box Ridge, Coraki