
FCAATSI-TRANBY APPEAL NIGHT

On November 19th last year, the N.S.W. Teachers' Federation launched its annual appeal for the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and Tranby Co-operative for Aborigines. At this function also, author Mr Allan Ashbolt launched the Federation's new book "*Special Problems, Special Needs of Aboriginal Children at School*".

In his introductory speech, Mr Ashbolt traced the history of white *attitudes* towards Aborigines. The first stage followed the 19th century idea that all dark people were "the white man's burden". Aborigines were regarded as uncivilized and inferior by the very white racists who sexually used Aboriginal women as mistresses. The second stage, he said, was the period of paternalism, still current in many white minds. The paternalist regarded Aborigines as a "problem" to be "dealt with" in such a manner as to be assimilated. Assimilation, said Mr Ashbolt, is a pious fraud—in effect it is the hope that the Aboriginal problem will *go away*, of itself. The third stage, said Mr Ashbolt, is best shown in the unqualified acceptance of black children by white children whose young minds have not been poisoned. This was pure acceptance—when the child *did not know* and *was not made to know* that he was black. This is what society generally should aim for, Mr Ashbolt urged.

Other points raised in this magnificent address were:

- Aborigines continue to know what it is to be a "non-person" in a world of white regulations and white indifference. Little has *really* changed since the May, 1967, Referendum.
- An adequate education system should serve *all* youngsters in a society. As long as books outlining the "*Special Problems, Special Needs of Aboriginal Children at School*" were necessary, this was not being achieved.

After the opening address, an excellent panel of speakers reinforced Mr Ashbolt's comments:

- Ken Brindle pointed out that there was no educational aid *at all* for primary school children

and that educational aid grants for high school students had been cut by 25 per cent. (The Department wishes to point out that this is a false picture of the true situation. The state allocation for Aborigines has been maintained. True, the Commonwealth has reduced its allocation *to the States* in respect of grants in aid to secondary pupils, but in place of that introduced a very generous scheme of its own for older secondary school pupils. For the younger ones, *the State scheme still applies*. The dividing line is the beginning of the year in which the child turns 15, at which time he moves from State help to Commonwealth help.)

- Government sponsored trade training, farm training and general employment courses, as well as culture revival courses, were provided for New Zealand's Maoris and should be started here for Aborigines.

- Harry Hall, of Walgett, noted that in the country, Aborigines *at best* can only get second-rate jobs which Europeans wouldn't do. Even these were becoming harder to get. What, he asked, was the use of a housing scheme when there was no employment to pay the rent? (There is a rental rebate scheme in operation. This means that if a tenant is out of work or on sickness benefits or goes onto a pension, the rent is reduced—usually so that the tenant pays no more than about one-fifth of his gross income from all sources in rent. A part of the earnings of grown-up children who live at home is also included in working this figure out. Special low rentals are fixed for aged people's units.)



Harry Hall.