

like their parents, tend to be shy around white people. Dealing with white people more often in this job has made me less shy and more confident."

Joan is hopeful for better things at Wilcannia. She believes the town has begun to change. "A few years back", she says, "there were white people and dark people. But now they're starting to mix—at dances etc. The white people have changed because these are people trying to help themselves. When they see this they try to help."

NEED TO BE AGGRESSIVE

"This change has taken place in the last 3 years. It was sparked off by people trying to help themselves. For instance, discrimination at the hotels has changed from what it was 3 or 4 years ago.

"But the people in Wilcannia still aren't aggressive enough. Some do stand up for themselves but a lot are shy."

Evidence of the people trying to do things for themselves includes the establishment of an all-black football team and of the Advancement Association which was set up 2 years ago. "This has given the people more confidence", says Joan, "because they are doing things for themselves."

Joan is also hopeful because she believes she can contribute to these developments. "I want to make a good job of what I've started", she says. "I'm hopeful about the future because if there is somebody like me working with the people and helping them help themselves, then later on more people will see what I'm doing and follow on.

"They need my help but I need their's more. Without their help it's no good. We should work on whatever the people want and feel. We should ask them more what they want and work from there."

While Joan is aware that she will be more readily accepted by the people than any white, she also believes they will be more critical of her. "The people will judge me more harshly. A white person can make mistakes because he doesn't know them and how they feel, like I do. This worries me."

Asked what is her main ambition, Joan replied: "I'd like to get people to help themselves. People helping themselves is what will satisfy me most, people depending on themselves rather than on others. But this is going to take a long time. It won't be an easy job. It'll take time and patience and understanding."

Smoke Signals

►FCAATSI ANNUAL CONFERENCE—

The 16th Annual Conference of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders took place in Brisbane on the Easter weekend of 20th-22nd April. General Secretary Faith Bandler stepped down from her position and was replaced by Pat Millar from Queensland. Joe McGuinness remains president. As a result of becoming Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Gordon Bryant resigned his position on the executive. He was replaced by Jack Davis. Nevil Perkins also became a vice-president of the organization. Lyn Thompson was appointed NSW secretary of FCAATSI. It was decided to hold the next annual conference in Alice Springs in 1974.

►LEGAL AID SCHEME BEING ESTABLISHED—

The Commonwealth Government's promised free legal aid scheme for Aborigines is well on the way towards implementation. In April representatives from voluntary agencies providing aid to Aborigines, including the Sydney Aboriginal Legal Service, met in Canberra to discuss the scheme. Recently the Government granted an additional \$10,000 to the Legal Service. The meeting in Canberra agreed on a draft scheme involving the extension of the present services provided by the Aboriginal Legal Service, including the establishment of regional offices in country areas; the use of lawyers in private practice; and the direct employment of lawyers, field officers and other staff.