

ABORIGINES' DAY OF MOURNING

Plan for 150th Anniversary

Plans for the observance by aborigines throughout Australia of a "day of mourning" simultaneously with the 150th anniversary celebrations in Sydney, were announced at a meeting last night convened by the Australian Aborigines' League.

"While white men are throwing their hats into the air with joy," said the chairman (Mr. A. P. A. Burdeu), "aborigines will be in mourning for all that they have lost."

It was hoped, Mr. Burdeu added, that the day of mourning would direct the attention of the people of Australia to the desire of the aborigines for full rights of citizenship.

Stating that he was proud of his aboriginal blood, Mr. William Ferguson, organising secretary of the Aborigines' Progressive Association of New South Wales, said that aborigines did not want protection. "We have been 'protected' for 150 years, and look what has become of us," he said.

"Scientists have studied us and written books about us as though we were some strange curiosity, but they have not prevented us from contracting tuberculosis and other diseases which have wiped us out in thousands."

Mr. Ferguson complained bitterly of the treatment of aborigines at aboriginal settlements in New South Wales. "It would be better for the authorities to turn a machine-gun on us," he said.

Mr. Douglas Nicholls, a leading Fitzroy footballer, who is an aborigine, said that aborigines were not satisfied merely to be kept alive by a weekly issue of rations. "We do not want chicken food," he said. "We are not chickens; we are eagles."

Resolutions were passed urging the development of North Australia by aborigines in preference to non-British Europeans.