"A BUNCH OF CAST-OFFS":

ABORIGINES OF THE SOUTHWEST OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, 1900–1936

by

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School of Social Inquiry
Murdoch University
February 1985
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any university.
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- For my sister Lynette -

Anna Haebich
February 1985
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<td>A</td>
<td>Aborigines Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>AF</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR</td>
<td>Annual Report of the Aborigines Department and its successors</td>
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<td>BL</td>
<td>Battye Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Colonial Secretary's Department</td>
</tr>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Colonial Secretary's Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>DN</td>
<td>Daily News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED</td>
<td>Education Department</td>
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<td>GG</td>
<td>Government Gazette</td>
</tr>
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<td>GSH</td>
<td>Great Southern Herald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>Department of Lands and Surveys</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Department of Public and Medical Health</td>
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<td>MH</td>
<td>Morning Herald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRC</td>
<td>Moseley Royal Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Department of the North West</td>
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<td>PD</td>
<td>Parliamentary Debates</td>
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<td>PG</td>
<td>Perth Gazette</td>
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<td>ST</td>
<td>Sunday Times</td>
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<td>SWASP</td>
<td>South West Aboriginal Studies Project</td>
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<td>WA</td>
<td>West Australian</td>
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<td>Votes and Proceedings</td>
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South West of Western Australia
(main place names mentioned in text)
South West of Western Australia
(regions and districts mentioned in text)

- Northampton
- Geraldton
- Mullewa

NORTHERN WHEATBelt

- Moora
- Merredin

MIDLANDS DISTRICT

- Kellerberrin
- Northam
- Fremantle

EASTERN WHEATBelt

- Narrogin

AVON DISTRICT

- Perth

GREAT SOUTHERN DISTRICT

- Katanning

SOUTH EASTERN WHEATBelt

- Mandurah
- Bunbury

Scale 1" : 75 miles

- Kalgoorlie
- Albany
- Esperance
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ABSTRACT

During the period from 1900 to 1936 Aborigines in the southwest of Western Australia experienced profound changes in their way of life and their status in the wider community. At the turn of the century most were economically independent: living in the bush, on station land, or on their own small farming blocks they found some degree of acceptance in the wider community. By the early 1930s, however, they had been reduced to the status of second-class citizens. Most were unemployed and lived in over-crowded fringe town camps or government institutions. They were despised and discriminated against by the wider community and were forced to live under strict discriminatory laws and to submit to the rigid control of the Aborigines Department.

This study examines the inter-connected factors contributing to this process of pauperisation, institutionalisation and exclusion from the wider community and the associated effects on the Aborigines' status and their way of life. A major contributory factor in this process was the introduction of the 1905 Aborigines Act which imposed severe legal restrictions over Aborigines, enabling their rigid control by the Department and for their social isolation from the wider community. Socio-economic changes in the southwest from the turn of the century also played a major role. Rapid agricultural development and white settlement broke down the Aborigines' existing social and economic adaptations. Combined with a sustained increase in the Aboriginal population these changes led to a rapid deterioration in their living conditions. Associated with this was the steady emergence of racial prejudice and discriminatory behaviour towards Aborigines. At the same time the increased presence of Aborigines
in the rural towns during periods of economic hardship led to outbursts of overt racism from white town residents.

From the years of the Great War, the Aborigines Department became increasingly bureaucratically streamlined and there was greater intervention in the lives of individual Aborigines in the south, although inadequate resources continued to place limits on its activities and the nature of services it could provide to Aborigines. The Aborigines were powerless to resist these changes and Departmental intervention and continued socio-economic changes during the 1920s forced increasing numbers into centralised government institutions or fringe town camps.

The Great Depression brought further hardships for Aborigines together with outbursts of racism against them and there was growing official and public concern at the "problem" of Aborigines in the southwest. These were important factors contributing to the introduction of the Native Administration Act in 1936. This legislation applied to virtually all persons of Aboriginal descent in the southwest and it further reduced their rights and increased the powers of the Department to control their activities and to segregate them from the wider community.
INTRODUCTION

Trends in Aboriginal History from the turn of the century

Academic Aboriginal history is a recent phenomenon. For much of this century, the Aborigines' role and place in Australia's history was shrouded in a cloak of silence. The small body of literature which existed until the early 1970s was completely overshadowed by the national historiography of Australian settlement and development which celebrated the virtues of European settlement and progress and which relegated Aborigines to a few paragraphs in its opening chapters. Meanwhile, a different version of the past was maintained by Aborigines through a vital oral tradition handed down through families over the generations. Glimpses of this history were also to be found in official and missionary records gathering dust in archives around the country. This "national cult of forgetfulness" (a phrase coined by W.H. Stanner during his Boyer Lectures in 1968) was broken during the early 1970s as historians began to draw on these alternative sources of information. Aboriginal history has now been able to take its place as a respected academic discipline, with its own journal (Aboriginal History) and body of literature.

Until the late nineteenth century, the history of contact between Aborigines and Europeans attracted considerable attention amongst historians.¹ As Biskup (1982) has pointed out, these accounts were generally based on the premise that the Australian continent was founded by European settlers not conquered; that Aborigines did not own the land; and that disease, rather than racial violence, precipitated the dramatic decline in the Aboriginal population during the nineteenth century. (These themes continue to dominate white Australian thinking on Aboriginal history and are only now being
challenged by historians.) Towards the end of the last century, Aborigines began to disappear from the Australian "historical consciousness" and Biskup attributes this to widespread beliefs that the Aboriginal race was doomed to die out (despite ample evidence to the contrary in northern Australia and in the south where the predominantly mixed descent population was showing signs of increase). The concept of a "white Australia" and racist attitudes towards all persons of Aboriginal descent also found growing support at the turn of the century. The conclusion was that there was no place for Aborigines in twentieth century Australia and this was duly reflected in Australian historiography.²

From this time Aborigines were dismissed in the history books in a few paragraphs or portrayed as "a weak and passive race bound to give way to a greater civilisation"³ and which had made no contribution whatsoever to the development of Australia. Frontier contact was presented as brief and unavoidable, Aboriginal resistance was overlooked, and legal devices denying Aboriginal sovereignty were used to justify, morally and legally, white attacks and reprisals on Aborigines. These views were given a "mantle of scientific respectability" through the theory of Social Darwinism and this became "twentieth century orthodoxy".⁴

Advances in the professionalisation of Australian history during the 1940s brought few changes for Aboriginal history, despite the publication of the pioneering works on Aboriginal policy and administration by Foxcroft (1941) and Hasluck (1942). Historians during the post-war period focussed their attentions on political and economic institutions of white Australia, leaving the writing up of the Aboriginal past to amateurs, antiquarians and popular writers and biographers. By the mid 1960s published literature on Aboriginal
history consisted of little more than two out-dated histories of official policy, a comparative study of policies in Australia, New Zealand and North America, an anthropologically based account of Aboriginal-white relations in South Australia, an analytical scheme of stages of Aboriginal-white interaction and two accounts of culture contact based on Aboriginal life histories.

It is appropriate here to examine the role of anthropologists in recording Aboriginal history. Especially before the 1970s, they produced some of the most influential historical works in this area. Professional anthropology in Australia dates from the late 1920s when Australia's first Chair of Anthropology was established at Sydney University. Dominated by the functionalist approach of British social anthropology, it focussed largely on synchronic studies of social organisation, kinship and religion in traditional Aboriginal societies in central and northern Australia. Diachronic and analytical studies were comparatively few. The less "exotic" populations of mixed descent in southern Australia were neglected, although a small number of studies of these populations emerged during the late 1940s and early 1950s under the influence of A.P. Elkin, then Professor of Anthropology at Sydney University. Initially these were essentially functionalist studies of particular communities and their "problems" (particularly in relation to the assimilationist policies of the day), intended to assist administrators and missionaries working with such groups. Studies by anthropologists such as R.M. and C.H. Berndt (1951b) and Fink (1960) attempted to combine the insights of anthropological and historical research through an examination of the motives of Aborigines and Europeans in the early stages of contact and the recent past. Their stated intention was to understand the present through the study of the past. However, they tended
to overlook the important events in the intervening period between first contact and the present and, with the dearth of substantial academic research in Aboriginal history, they often followed conventional historians in focussing largely on administrative and legal frameworks and in repeating their orthodox views of the Aboriginal past. In addition, they failed to fully examine the broader historical processes shaping rural Australian society and to relate these to the situation of Aborigines. Their concerns also reflected the assimilationist policies of the 1950s and 1960s. The analytical framework of stages of Aboriginal response to European settlement devised by Elkin (1951) has had a strong influence on other anthropologists and historians. Biskup (1973), for example, uses this model in his overview of the history of "culture contact" in Western Australia. However, with the progress of research into Aboriginal history during the 1970s it has come increasingly under attack for being over-generalised and simplistic, inherently racist and essentially assimilationist in its focus.13

The new directions in Aboriginal history evident in the late 1960s and early 1970s reflected Aborigines' changing place in Australia. Their re-emergence into Australian society, heralded during the 1960s by the rejection of the official policy of assimilation, the removal of discriminatory legislation and the granting of full political rights, was accompanied by a revived interest in their past and historians began to draw back the "veil of forgetfulness" which had clouded Aboriginal history from the turn of the century. The publication of Rowley's trilogy Aboriginal Policy and Practice in 1970 and 1971 was a major breakthrough. It provided a wide-ranging account of the past of Aborigines of full and part descent throughout Australia from the time of early European
settlement to the present. It also had the indirect effect of high-lighting deficiencies in the field of Aboriginal history and providing the basis for much of the research and writing which was to follow.¹⁴

The publication of scholarly and popular literature on Aboriginal history has boomed since this time. Written largely by non-Aborigines there has nevertheless been a growing input from Aboriginal people, and there has been a growing interest in inter-weaving oral and written evidence to provide a rounded view of Aboriginal history. Trends in academic research during the late 1970s and early 1980s have included a move away from broad general histories such as Rowley's to an emphasis on exploring the diverse experiences of Aborigines through biographies,¹⁵ family histories,¹⁶ local community and regional studies,¹⁷ histories of missions,¹⁸ and research into particular aspects of Aboriginal history such as Aboriginal resistance to European conquest,¹⁹ emerging Aboriginal protest and political action,²⁰ institutionalisation²¹ and the role of Aborigines in the economy.²² There has also been a strong trend towards an inter-disciplinary approach, particularly in the fields of anthropology and history. As the body of hard data expands, there is also a growing emphasis amongst historians on debunking the many myths which continue to blur the wider community's vision of Aboriginal history.²³

* * * * *

The published history of Aboriginal-European relations in Western Australia strongly reflects these broader trends. For much of this century it was dominated by the orthodox view outlined above. This fitted closely with the approach of Western Australian historians to the state's history which was essentially "elitist, pastoral, sexist and racist" and which extolled the status quo, the virtues
of political and economic progress, the "heroic" role of the "pioneer" European and which presented the view of a society characterised by harmony and well-being. Aborigines had little place in such a version of history.

J.S. Battye, possibly the state's most influential historian, was also a Social Darwinist. Writing in 1912-1913, he depicted Aborigines as "a primitive type of humanity", deficient in intelligence and lacking in morals. Their "extinction" was "only a matter of time" and this would "solve some of the difficulties". He later justified massacres such as that at Pinjarra in 1834 and claimed that in Western Australia there had been only "isolated instances of cruelty towards natives" by white settlers. Aborigines, on the other hand, were "treacherous" towards whites and most had become "persistent beggars".

These views found strong expression in the writings of the amateur anthropologist, Daisy Bates, whose descriptions of Aborigines of the southwest at the turn of the century have exerted a strong influence at the popular level and on historians and anthropologists. Bates was employed by the Registrar General of Western Australia during the early 1900s to sift through existing records on Aborigines so as to build up an authoritative account of Aborigines' customs and their treatment since European settlement. In 1904 she decided to make her own first-hand observations of Aboriginal life and she set up camp at Welshpool Reserve, then a ration depot for elderly and destitute Aborigines from Perth and the surrounding districts. Later in the decade she also visited a number of similar camps in the far southwest. Her main interest became the salvaging of the Aboriginal traditions in the area which she gleaned from interviews and discussions with elderly Aborigines in the camps. This material,
together with information on the "quaint" lives of her informants, was published in the popular press of the time,\textsuperscript{27} and also provided the basis for her chapters on southwest Aborigines in her book, \textit{The Passing of the Aborigines} (1939).

Bates believed that the Aboriginal people of the southwest were all but "extinct", and she wrote nostalgically of these "children of the woodland" dying out in the face of "civilisation", "a kindness that killed as surely and swiftly as cruelty would have done".\textsuperscript{28} She wrote with some feeling of the "living remnants" of this "once great race" cut off from their traditions and now living in squalid camps, "all of them on Government rations and beggars".\textsuperscript{29} However, she had only contempt for the surviving generation of persons of mixed descent. She described them as "bad" and "lazy" and claimed that Aborigines of the full descent would have nothing to do with them because they "smelt worse than white people".\textsuperscript{30} This contrasts with the numerous examples in her field notebooks of Aborigines of the full and part descent living amicably together. Bates was writing in terms of her own prejudices which she later expressed in the following comment in the \textit{Sunday Times}:

\begin{quote}
...as to half-castes, however early they may be taken and trained, with very few exceptions, the only good half-caste is a dead one.
\end{quote}

Bates also maintained that Aboriginal tradition in the southwest was virtually "lost" and implied that the younger generations knew nothing of the ways of their ancestors.

Bates' view of Aborigines in the southwest at the turn of the century as passive and dependent "remnants" on the verge of physical and cultural extinction and her misguided emphasis on the lack of interaction between Aborigines of the full and part descent is still
to be found in historical and anthropological writing today. Biskup (1973) distinguishes between "full-bloods" who were "dying out" and who "preferred to live on Government rations" and "part-Aborigines" who were largely "mission-educated" and in employment. While they were still few in number, they were nevertheless becoming "a recognised social problem".\textsuperscript{32} The anthropologist, R.M. Berndt, writing in the same year, stated that few persons of the mixed descent in the south were descended from the local indigenous population and that they possessed "little or nothing of their traditional heritage".\textsuperscript{33} Elkin,\textsuperscript{34} in a clear reference to the southwest, wrote of the "last" survivors of several "tribes" living in small groups on the "outskirts of townships" and "existing in a state of futile pauperism", while Bolton\textsuperscript{35} clearly echoed Bates in claiming that the few "remnants" in the southwest were all "spending their last years" at Welshpool Reserve.

The widely held assumption that the "real" Aborigines had all but died out in the southwest by the turn of the century and that the remaining predominantly mixed descent population had no ties with their Aboriginal past and were therefore little different to whites of similar socio-economic levels, has had a number of important consequences for historical and anthropological research in the area. For much of this century southwest Aborigines have virtually been left out of the history books and their place in the economic, social and political history of the area has been ignored; see, for example, Crowley (1960), the major authoritative history between Battye and Stannage's \textit{A New History of Western Australia} (1981). Where they are mentioned it is almost invariably in terms of the racist and patronising stereotypes outlined earlier. Until recently there has been a dearth of academic research on the population, while by
contrast there has been a sustained interest in the more visible traditionally-oriented Aboriginal communities in the north of the state. This is particularly evident in research proceeding from the Department of Anthropology, established at the University of Western Australia in the 1950s, which has shown a strong emphasis on functionalist studies of traditional communities in the north. A number of graduate and post-graduate studies of Aboriginal communities in certain southern rural towns were undertaken during the 1950s and 1960s. Reflecting trends in other states outlined earlier, these tended to focus on southwest Aborigines as a "social problem" and were strongly influenced by the assimilationist policies of the day. From the early 1970s there has been some interest in reconstructing patterns of traditional Aboriginal life in the south using early colonial records and the "often fragile memories of elderly aborigines". More recently there have been several detailed ethnohistorical studies of traditional life in specific regions, for example the Albany district. It is only recently that anthropologists have begun to look at the intervening period of Aboriginal-European contact in the southwest, although to date this has only produced impressionistic and generalised accounts which fail to adequately grapple with cherished assumptions about the Aboriginal past; see for example Howard (1981) and Tilbrook (1983). Howard, however, on the basis of fieldwork in the area, does recognise that despite the devastating effect of European colonisation on Aboriginal culture in the southwest, there has nevertheless been a considerable degree of "continuity and syncretic transformation".

Similarly there has been little authoritative historical research focussing on the history of Aborigines in the southwest and, again, that which exists reflects early assumptions about the southwest
Aboriginal population. Since the 1940s, historians have concentrated on general histories of the policy and administration of Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia and the major works in this area are Hasluck (1942), Biskup (1973) and Marchant (1981). As these writers concede, these histories are not primarily concerned with Aborigines but, rather, with the "unending debate among the white Western Australians". Based on official records, they strongly reflect the biases of official policy makers and administrators. Thus, as Biskup himself admits, the development of Aboriginal-European relations tends to be seen as emerging autonomously from political and bureaucratic decisions rather than as responses to the overall changing socio-economic patterns in Western Australia. These studies fail to adequately present the dynamics of the emerging administration and the implementation of official policies and discriminatory laws pertaining to Aborigines. Thus Biskup (1973) overlooks the impact of the marked reduction in the legal status of persons of the part descent, particularly those living an Aboriginal lifestyle, during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Instead, he claims that they managed to "cling" to their "European status" and that the reduction in their status only began during the first decade of this century. He also virtually ignores the vital role of the police in the administration of Aboriginal affairs at the local level and the enforcement of discriminatory laws. There is little examination of the attitudes and actions of members of the wider community; Biskup for example, simply states that Aborigines in the southwest were increasingly discriminated against early this century because of "their rapid increase and the subsequent emergence of racial prejudice". With the exception of Woenne's (1979) study of Royal Commissions and Inquiries into Aboriginal affairs in Western
Australia, there is little questioning of the motives and actions of politicians, policy makers and administrators. Aborigines are simply presented as a "problem" (Biskup sub-titles his book "The Aboriginal Problem in Western Australia 1898-1954"), defined by the wider community and dealt with by the relevant administrators. Aborigines in the southwest this century have little other point of identity for historians. Biskup deals with them primarily as an "ethnic group" increasing rapidly in numbers and "relegated to the status of second-class citizens, despised and discriminated against wherever they turn". The vital contribution of Aborigines to the development of rural areas in the south and their efforts to function as "economic men" are also virtually ignored. Thus Biskup dismisses the earnest efforts of some Aborigines to establish their own farms early this century and, overlooking the complex reasons for their inability to gain finance to develop their farms, simply attributes "their ruin" to their lack of "experience and capital" and their obligation to share with "their kith and kin... on a communal basis, the fruit of their labour". There is little recognition of the Aborigines' ties with their past traditions and no attempt is made to examine their response to change, their adapting lifestyles, or their experiences. Recent works by Green (1981) and Bolton (1981) make only small steps in remedying this situation. The Aboriginal experience and point of view is conspicuously absent. However, in recent years a number of Aboriginal writers, including the poet and playwright Jack Davis (1982) and the activists Ken Colbung (1979) and Robert Bropho (1980) have offered their views of Aboriginal-European relations in drama, autobiography and film.
This thesis sets out to explode the myths about Aborigines in the southwest and to overcome the many omissions in the recording of Aboriginal-European history in the area. It starts from the premise that the Aboriginal population at the turn of the century had a continuity with its Aboriginal past. Most Aborigines were indigenous to the area and, while there were some who lived a predominantly white lifestyle, there were many who continued to follow a way of life incorporating a good deal of Aboriginal tradition and who recognised their Aboriginal ancestry. Most were self-supporting and, far from being on the verge of "extinction" as a distinct minority group, the population was poised on the brink of rapid expansion.

Particular attention is paid to emerging white racism in rural areas and the associated development of discriminatory policies and legislation. The dynamics of the implementation of these policies and laws, particularly in relation to the development of the Aborigines Department, the motives of its senior administrators, and the role of the police, are examined in detail. At the same time the Aboriginal population is placed in the context of broader social, economic, demographic and political changes occurring in the southwest between 1900 and 1936. The Aborigines' response to these changes in terms of their emerging lifestyles, employment opportunities, social networks, their place in the wider community and their attempts to influence the course of events are also detailed. Insights are also provided into the experiences of Aborigines living in fringe town camps and government institutions. The Aboriginal point of view is often expressed directly in the text through frequent quotes from letters sent by Aborigines to the
Aborigines Department and from the interviews conducted as part of this research.

* * * * *

The impetus for this study stemmed from my discussions with a wide range of Aboriginal people while I was employed as Academic Research Assistant on the South West Aboriginal Studies Project, funded by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and supervised by L. Tilbrook at the Mount Lawley College in Perth between 1977 and 1979. These discussions led to a determination to set down the experiences of Aborigines in the southwest under the harsh discriminatory laws introduced in Western Australia from 1905.

Early in 1979 I embarked on my research, with the aid of a Murdoch University Research Scholarship. However, I soon found that it was impossible to give a rounded account of Aborigines' experiences without first explaining the many social, economic, political, administrative and legal causal factors behind the processes of pauperisation and institutionalisation. The Aboriginal people with whom I spoke were generally unaware of these broader aspects and the available published historical sources failed to adequately account for these processes. In addition, I found that while there was a wealth of archival data on the actions of the government and departments involved in the administration of Aboriginal affairs, there were only a limited number of surviving Aboriginal people with detailed memories of the period. At the same time, I also came to increasingly question my role as a white Australian using this particular approach to Aboriginal history. My own background limited my access to vital oral material and, while I found a good deal of interest and cooperation from Aboriginal people, there were many
who strongly put the case that what I was seeking was "Aboriginal information" and that it was the responsibility of Aboriginal people to record this. Several people expressed the strong intention to record their own family histories and they suggested that I could best contribute by using my skills to develop a broad historical account on which they could build their own experiential versions of Aboriginal history in the southwest.

These various factors led me to adopt an approach which sought to interweave the general experiences of Aboriginal people with administrative, legal, economic, policial and social history. In this way I have attempted to explain the various processes of change affecting Aborigines in the southwest during the period 1900 to 1936 and to depict the impact of these changes on the Aboriginal population.

This account draws heavily on archival material such as departmental records which naturally reflect the concerns and prejudices of white administrators and officials. Oral material collected from Aboriginal people as part of my research was used as a "supplementary and corrective technique" to balance the biases of the archival records and to develop my own "historical consciousness" of the Aboriginal experience. This material was also used to "fill in" the many gaps in our knowledge of Aboriginal history and to provide "flesh for the sometimes arid bones of history". 47

Data for this study was collected between 1979 and 1980. During 1979 and 1980 I made several field trips to the southwest where I made contact with a number of elderly Aboriginal people who very generously agreed to be interviewed about their experiences. Transcripts of these interviews are to be found in Appendix I. The interviews have been edited so as to remove the interviewer's
questions and to provide a chronological sequence. Otherwise they are as recorded. Also from 1979 I researched the records of the Aborigines Department and the Police Department at Battye Library in Perth. I was fortunate in that I could skim freely through the files of the Aborigines Department and I was thus able to gain a rounded view of its activities. More recently, the Western Australian government has decided to strictly limit access to these records so as to protect the privacy of individuals mentioned in the files. In using these files I have at all times respected the privacy of Aboriginal people and, where possible, I have sought the prior approval of Aboriginal families mentioned in this thesis.

For the purposes of this thesis, the "southwest" of Western Australia is defined loosely as the entire southwest area of Western Australia, from the Mullewa district in the north to the coast east of Esperance, bounded by an arc drawn southeast, including Norseman. This area is distinct geographically and in terms of recent history covering the period of European settlement from 1829 to today. It was also distinct in terms of traditional Aboriginal culture and language. Aborigines inhabiting this area did not practise circumcision and Aboriginal languages traditionally spoken in the region form a sub-group of languages which are related structurally and which form a distinct linguistic grouping referred to generically as "Nyungar". The area also has significance in terms of contemporary Aboriginal identity and Aborigines living within this region generally refer to themselves as "Nyungars".

I have chosen to use the term "Aborigines" rather than "Aboriginals" or "Aboriginal people", partly because of its convenience and because this term was officially adopted by Aborigines participating in the first Aboriginal Writers Conference held at
Murdoch University in 1983. I have avoided, as far as possible, using the derogatory terms half-caste, quadroon etc. Where I have been obliged to use these terms in discussion of details of the state's discriminatory legislation I have indicated them as follows: "half-caste", "quadroon", etc. I have also endeavoured to avoid using "part-Aborigines", a term which most Aborigines today regard as making an invidious distinction between persons of Aboriginal descent. This distinction had little to do with the realities of Aborigines' dealings with each other during the period under study; rather, it reflected the concerns of officialdom and the wider community. Where I have used the term, it is in the context of those concerns and where it is too clumsy stylistically to use the more appropriate and acceptable terms "Aborigines of mixed descent" or "Aborigines of the part descent". In the transcripts of interviews with Aborigines and in quotes from letters written by Aborigines used in the thesis, I have retained the often idiosyncratic style and spelling of the speaker or writer without recourse to the device "sic". I believe its use would detract from the style and flow of the texts and would unnecessarily insult and belittle the speaker or writer.

The focus of this thesis is on the period 1900 to 1936, covering the passing of the 1905 Aborigines Act up to the introduction of the Native Administration Act in 1936. The period from 1936 saw the beginning of an even harsher system of administration of Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia and this was followed closely by the events of post-Second World War when Aboriginal people began to push for the removal of their legal disabilities. However, it was not until the mid 1960s that the discriminatory legislation pertaining to Aborigines was removed from the Western Australian Statutes.
CHAPTER ONE of this thesis provides an overview of the situation of Aborigines in southwestern Australia at the beginning of this century.

The SECOND chapter analyses events leading up to the introduction of the 1905 Aborigines Act, the nature of this legislation and its implications for Aborigines in the southwest.

This is followed by CHAPTER THREE which examines the emerging structure of the Aborigines Department and the implementation of the 1905 Act from 1906 to 1911, particularly in relation to Aborigines in the southwest.

CHAPTER FOUR examines socio-economic changes precipitated by government sponsored programmes of agricultural development and white settlement in the southwest between 1900 and 1914 and the effects of these changes on Aborigines living in the area.

In CHAPTER FIVE the racial tensions which erupted in the southwest between 1911 and 1914 are examined together with the government's response to demands from white residents for the removal of Aborigines from their towns. The adoption of a policy of social isolation of Aborigines in concentrated settlements and the appointment of a dynamic chief administrator, A.O. Neville, to implement this policy marked a major turning point for Aborigines in the southwest. The establishment of the settlements and their effects on Aborigines in the southwest are also discussed.

CHAPTER SIX outlines further socio-economic changes in the southwest and the deterioration in the administration of the Aborigines Department during the early 1920s. It also describes the institutionalised patterns of living which emerged in the government farming settlements and the Aborigines' camps which developed on the fringes of the southern rural towns during this period.
CHAPTER SEVEN outlines the trend towards increased control and segregation in the administration of Aboriginal affairs in the southwest and the evolving policies of Chief Protector Neville in relation to persons of part-Aboriginal descent. It also examines the revival of mission work in the area in response to the deteriorating economic conditions of Aborigines and the Aborigines' response to their changing situation. Trends in policy and administration at the national level and their implications for Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia are also discussed.

The FINAL CHAPTER examines the effects of the Great Depression on Aborigines in the southwest. It also looks at growing Departmental and community alarm at the Aboriginal "problem" in the south. Together with outspoken criticisms of the treatment of Aborigines in the north of the state this prompted the government to appoint the Moseley Royal Commission into the condition of Aborigines in Western Australia and this in turn led to the passing of strict amending legislation, the Native Administration Act, in 1936. The nature of this legislation and its implications for Aborigines in the south are also discussed.
FOOTNOTES - Introduction

4. Ibid.
5. Foxcroft, 1941; Hasluck, 1942.
11. Ibid.
13. Prentis, 1975; Goodall, n.d.
27. See Bates, "Newspapers articles, 1901 - 1938".
30. Ibid: 70.
31. ST 2/10/1921.
36. See for example Harrison, 1950; Tonkinson, 1962.


40. Biskup, 1973: i.


44. Biskup, 1973: 140.


49. Ibid.
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

At the beginning of this century there were some fifteen hundred persons of Aboriginal descent living in the southwest of Western Australia. Most were the direct descendants of the original inhabitants of the area whose traditional way of life had been profoundly disrupted by British colonisation and settlement during the nineteenth century. This settlement had also precipitated a dramatic decrease in the size of the original population, while miscegenation had led to the gradual emergence of an Aboriginal population of predominantly mixed racial descent. Their numbers were increasing at the turn of the century. Scattered largely in the less settled parts of the south, they followed a variety of lifestyles incorporating varying combinations of elements of European and traditional Aboriginal. Their status in the wider community was determined largely by lifestyle and degree of Aboriginal descent and this was reflected in the Statutes of the Colony during the late nineteenth century. These discriminated increasingly against all Aborigines of the full descent. Biskup (1973) states that those of the part descent were virtually unaffected by this legislation and that the reduction in their legal status began during the early years of this century. However, this process was already advanced in the late nineteenth century in relation to the status of all Aborigines of the "half-blood" before local courts while at the same time those of the half descent living an essentially Aboriginal way of life were increasingly classified as "Aboriginal natives" in the legislation and treated accordingly.
The Original Inhabitants of the Southwest

Aborigines lived in the southwestern corner of the Australian continent for at least 31,000 years prior to the arrival of the first British settlers to establish the Swan River Colony in 1829.\(^1\) An estimated population of 6,000 Aborigines lived in the region at the time of first European contact,\(^2\) their numbers being distributed unevenly. Hallam (1977) suggests a population ratio of one person per four square miles in the fertile Swan River valley and other riverine estuaries, with correspondingly lower ratios in the dense rain forests of the far southwest corner and in the drier wooded inland areas stretching from the Darling scarp eastwards to the fringes of the arid desert interior. The population was divided into several tribal groups speaking a number of related languages and dialects (now referred to generically as Nyungar, a term originally meaning "person" or "man") which, together with certain cultural practices (for example their non-practice of circumcision), served to distinguish them from their Aboriginal neighbours to the north and east.\(^3\)

The Aborigines followed a semi-nomadic hunting and gathering lifestyle which left them dependent on their immediate environment for virtually all their physical and material needs. However, they exercised a degree of management over their environment through periodic controlled burning of the bush and forest areas. Firing created vast tracts of grazing lands for game such as kangaroo, caused certain plants to germinate and improved the taste of certain root foods. It also cleared away the undergrowth, thereby facilitating movement through the bush while game driven out by the fires supplied immediate food needs.\(^4\)
The availability of natural resources placed strict limitations on maximum population levels. Various regulatory practices appear to have served to maintain a balance between population and resources. Families were generally small: most women had only two or three surviving children, usually separated by long time intervals.\textsuperscript{5} Spontaneous and induced abortion, prolonged breast feeding (women of the Albany district were said to have breast fed their children to the age of four or five)\textsuperscript{6} and, perhaps, infanticide contributed to the small size of the families.\textsuperscript{7} Regulation of the ratio of females to the total population,\textsuperscript{*} the widespread practice of polygamy together with warfare and retributive killings\textsuperscript{**} also appear to have played a role in population control.\textsuperscript{8}

\textsuperscript{*} Hallam (1977: 27) states that the number of male children exceeded female children at the rate of between three to eight male children to two female children. It is not clear how this ratio was maintained. Hallam suggests that the chains of retributive killings following a death in the community may have been terminated by the spearing of female children. However, it is more likely that preferential care for male children at the expense of female children and, perhaps, female infanticide were instrumental in bringing about this ratio. Combined with the practice of polygamy, the low female ratio meant that a considerable number of young males were left without sexual partners at the height of their reproductive powers and this no doubt played some role in limiting the population.

\textsuperscript{**} The Aborigines did not regard death as accidental; rather they attributed it to direct malevolent human intervention and, with the exception of deaths of the very young and elderly, all deaths were bound to be avenged by the retaliatory killing of the member of another group. Certain conventions regulated the carrying out of these killings: following a death, kinsmen of the deceased conferred on the identity of the responsible party, usually under the guidance of a sorcerer or respected elder, and, when consensus was reached, steps were taken to avenge the death, either through assassination or sorcery intended to bring misfortune and death to the culprit. Group responsibility and culpability were firmly entrenched values and often a kinsman of the culprit rather than the culprit himself became the victim. In some cases retaliation was carried out immediately however, in the case of distant tribes it could be years before revenge was achieved. One death could lead to a string of retaliatory killings before all parties were satisfied (Berndt, 1979; Tilbrook, 1983; Reece, 1984).
The availability of resources also determined the maximum size of local social groupings and migratory shifts were essential to ensure optimal utilisation of resources. The primary unit of interaction was the band. Of mixed membership, it exploited a clearly delimited territory, the extent of which was determined by the local ecology. Alongside the bands were patrilineal (and in some areas matrilineal) totemic descent groups concerned with religious matters. Their members had strong ties to religiously significant sites within their "estates" and were responsible for maintaining spiritual ties with the natural environment. The bands usually numbered about ten people and were made up of members of a number of totemic descent groups and their spouses and children. The bands moved continuously across their defined territories, adjusting their stay in any one place in accordance with the availability of resources and the seasons. Aborigines in coastal areas, for example, moved into the sheltered wooded hinterland during the winter months where they hunted kangaroo and possum. In summer they returned to the coast where they lived largely on seafood. The bands jealously guarded their territory from encroachment by others and had a strong sense of ownership over resources in their area. There were no set leaders; authority was determined by sex and seniority and varied according to the situation. While the senior men of the group were generally more powerful, certain older "wise women" also had relatively high status and the right to arbitrate in armed disputes and quarrels. Sorcerers were believed to have the power to bring misfortune and death to others and they wielded considerable influence. They also filled the role of healer and were believed to be able to influence the elements (for example, by causing rain) and to perform such
supernatural feats as rendering themselves invisible and flying through the air.\textsuperscript{11}

Neighbouring bands were loosely tied into "tribes". Up to thirteen such units have been identified in the south and they each appear to have consisted of between two hundred and four hundred people.\textsuperscript{12} The tribe was a unit of identity and social contact rather than action however. Each tribe lived in a loosely defined geographical area and its members shared common features of language, social organisation and ritual which served to distinguish them from members of neighbouring tribes. Outside the tribes there was little social integration although marriage ties sometimes existed, together with visiting obligations and mutual cooperation in initiation ceremonies and in the hosting of young male initiates for prolonged periods.\textsuperscript{13} Social interaction within the tribe took the form of ritual and ceremonial gatherings. Alterations to customs, law and ceremonies were discussed at some of these meetings and goods were often traded and marriages arranged. Some meetings, known as mundjar, were held exclusively for trading. The size of the gatherings was determined by the availability of resources. Most averaged around two hundred people but meetings of up to four and even seven hundred people were reported in some districts by European observers during the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{*} Hammond (1933) states that Winjan, a prominent Aboriginal of the Mandurah district during the nineteenth century, married four women from each of the four tribes bordering his territory for the express purpose of forging amicable relations with these tribes.

\textsuperscript{**} Hammond (1933) recorded that large gatherings were held at a site west of Wagin and at Bailup, east of Guildford, during the nineteenth century. Up to 400 people gathered at Bailup to discuss alterations to various rituals and customs and the large size of the meeting was made possible by the plenitude of game in the area. Periodic meetings were also held for ceremonies and fishing at the mungah (fish trap) at Barragup on the Serpentine River and on the Murray River at Mandurah.
Aboriginal Women, King George Sound, 1858
Aboriginal life was regulated by strict rules of conduct. Sharing was mandatory within the band and sex, age and kinship relationships determined codes of behaviour and obligation between individuals. Rules for marriage were incorporated in the moiety system: individuals were assigned at birth to a moiety and to exogamous matrilineal or patrilineal divisions within the moiety system. These divisions determined who an individual could marry. Persons who infringed these rules were punished by ritual spearing and even death. Girls were betrothed in childhood to adult men and usually married on reaching puberty. Meanwhile the young men entered initiation which extended over several years in stages marking their gradual achievement of adult status. On completion of the cycle they too could marry. Despite strong prohibitions, the abduction of women and elopements were common. This usually led to fighting and scores were often settled by the ritual spearing of the guilty parties.\footnote{15}

A close spiritual tie with the land permeated traditional Aboriginal life. This was expressed in the various rituals performed by totemic descent groups at certain sacred sites and in the prohibition on the eating of animals or birds with which group members had a close spiritual bond. Individuals also had close spiritual ties to localities of personal significance to them (for example their place of birth) and with totems associated with certain religious categories and progression through the various stages of religious knowledge.\footnote{16} The Aborigines' close spiritual ties with the land were a constant theme in their myths, dances, songs and ceremonies.

\textbf{Aborigines and European Settlement}

The Aborigines' physical and social environments were profoundly and irrevocably changed by the invasion of the southwest by British
colonists during the nineteenth century. In 1826 the British government established a military outpost at King George Sound on the south coast of Western Australia and three years later 652 British settlers arrived at Fremantle to establish the Swan River Colony. Their numbers doubled over the next decade and by 1850 the Colony had a European population of 5,886. The transportation of male convicts to the Colony from that year brought a further increase and by 1870 the population had grown to 25,084. Although transportation stopped in that year, the population continued to increase over the next three decades, rising to 179,967 in 1900 following the dramatic rush to the Western Australian goldfields during the 1890s.\textsuperscript{17}

European settlement spread slowly through the southwest from the 1830s. The land was taken up by colonists without regard for the Aborigines' special relationship to their defined territories or their dependence on the natural environment for their survival. During the 1830s settlement spread along the fertile river valleys of the Swan and Canning Rivers and at the same time small farming settlements were established at King George Sound, the mouth of the Blackwood River (now Augusta) and along the Murray River at the present sites of Pinjarra and Mandurah. In 1831 a military outpost was opened at Point Leschenault (now Bunbury) and land in the Vasse district to the south was thrown open for selection in 1834. In the following year land to the east of Perth was surveyed as far as York, Beverley and Northam and in 1836 the Moore River district was explored. Land in these various districts was taken up largely for intensive cultivation: the commercial production of wheat for hay and grain in the Avon Valley, grapes and fruit in the Swan River valley, market gardening around Perth, Busselton, Bunbury and Albany and dairying in the Swan River valley, the Vasse and the coastal
hinterland near Bunbury. During the mid 1840s kangaroo hunters and sandalwood cutters penetrated the inland regions of the south and at the same time settlers began to graze stock there and in the rain forests of the southwest corner. Pastoral occupation of the southwest continued between 1850 and 1870 and also moved north into the Victoria Plains and the Greenough districts and east towards the fringes of the arid interior. By the 1890s vast areas of the south, including most of today's wheat belt, stretching from the west coast across to Bremer Bay and around to Esperance were held under pastoral lease. Indeed, the major form of land utilisation in the south at this time was depasturing on land leased from the Crown rather than crop farming on privately owned land. Cattle and horses were run on stations in the far southwest forest areas where noxious weeds, wild dogs and damp conditions made extensive grazing of sheep hazardous. Outside these areas sheep were the focus of the pastoral industry. Interspersed between the pastoral leases in the south were large tracts of unalienated Crown land lacking water and suitable grazing pastures and therefore unsuited to pastoral use.  

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The goldrushes of the 1890s brought major changes to the economy of Western Australia but led to little immediate change in rural

* Information on the pastoral industry in the south is scant. Its development during the early 1840s was facilitated by the introduction of temporary occupation leases and licenses to depasture which enabled settlers to graze stock in bush areas. This system was replaced in 1851 by one of pastoral leases varying in duration from one year in settled and coastal areas to eight years further inland, with an annual rent of 10/- for each 400 ha under lease. In 1872 a minimum area of 20,000 acres for pastoral leases granted was introduced. The pastoral industry in the south was stimulated by the availability of convict labour during the 1850s and 1860s and rising prices for wool. Pastoral expansion in the south had reached its limits by 1870 and from this time development of the industry was confined largely to the north and northwest of the state (Bolton and Hutchinson, 1973; Western Australia: An Atlas of Human Endeavour, 1979).
patterns of settlement and land utilisation in the south. Despite strenuous efforts by the colonial government to promote closer settlement on intensively cultivated farming blocks, only 6.6 million acres out of a total 64.5 million acres of land in the south had been alienated or was in the process of being alienated by 1900.19 The major changes in settlement and land utilisation in the area were to occur from the early years of this century.

As European settlement spread outwards, Aborigines found themselves having to compete with a group of powerful and numerous outsiders who did not conform to the rules of their social universe and whose sedentary way of life based on agriculture and pastoralism conflicted with their own semi-nomadic hunting and gathering adaptation. There were early attempts at armed resistance when the Aborigines realised that the colonists intended to remain permanently in their territories. However, lacking firearms and the skills to organise themselves into large effective attacking parties, their efforts met with little success and it soon became evident to them that they would have to adjust to the permanent presence of their invaders. The way of life of Aborigines in areas of close European settlement (also the areas of highest Aboriginal population densities prior to colonisation) was profoundly disrupted. They were dispossessed of their lands, their traditional resources were destroyed or depleted, their traditional practices were ruthlessly suppressed when disapproved of by the settlers and, ravaged by introduced diseases, they died in large numbers. The settlers gave little thought to the Aborigines' plight and, despite directives from the British government that they were to be accorded the full status and legal rights of British citizens and encouraged to adopt British beliefs and customs, Aborigines were allotted only a limited place
in the colony. Some found employment as domestic and farm workers but when not in employment they were left to maintain themselves as best they could by their traditional skills of hunting and gathering. 20

Aborigines in the areas of pastoral settlement in the southwest were less devastated by European settlement. Penetration of their territory was less rapid and the European population was sparse and widely dispersed. While the depletion of their natural resources by stock, white kangaroo hunters, shepherds and others forced them all into some degree of dependency on the settler economy, and introduced diseases also decimated their numbers, they were nevertheless able to maintain some access to their territories and there was far less disruption of their living patterns. Employment on pastoral stations or kangaroo hunting meant that there was considerable scope for the use of their traditional skills and less pressure to conform to a European lifestyle. In addition, despite the exploitative nature of most employment arrangements between Aborigines and whites, pastoralists and their employees and the hunters, isolated from the centres of white settlement, often found companionship with the Aborigines and a good number established families with local Aboriginal women.

Aborigines of the Southwest at the turn of the century

The Aboriginal Population

(i) Population size

European settlement brought about a dramatic increase in the Aboriginal population in the southwest. By 1901 there were only some 1,529 persons of Aboriginal descent (653 of the full descent and 876 classified as "half-castes"). 21 This was just a quarter
of the original estimated Aboriginal population of 6,000. This reflected the effects of a drastic increase in the death rate and decrease in the birth rate of the original finely tuned hunting and gathering population of the area.*

Skirmishes between Aborigines and Europeans and punitive raids on Aborigines accounted for only a small part of the initial increase in the death rate.** The major causal factor was introduced disease, principally measles, influenza, tuberculosis, whooping cough, pneumonia and venereal disease. A geographically isolated population, the Aborigines had no previous exposure to these diseases and thus no developed immune reaction. Their exposed way of life, together with poor nutrition levels following the loss of their traditional food resources and their replacement by European foods such as white flour and sugar, and widespread demoralisation at the

* Given the lack of comprehensive and reliable quantitative data on the Aboriginal population during the nineteenth century it is only possible to provide an impressionistic sketch of trends. Adequate census material and vital registrations are not available. Censuses taken during this period generally enumerated only those Aborigines in employment and/or living close to white settlement. Statistics on the Aboriginal population are therefore incomplete. There is little breakdown of figures into such useful categories as age percentiles (this was first done in the 1891 Census) and changing territorial divisions between censuses make the analysis of demographic trends over time almost impossible. There was also little attempt to enforce the registration of Aboriginal births, deaths and marriages during the nineteenth century. In 1899 the Solicitor General stated that although such registrations were required by law, no one would consider applying it to persons of Aboriginal descent. In any case the Registrar General was not required to keep separate figures on Aborigines and birth and death registration forms did not seek information on race (Lancaster-Jones, 1970).

** Green (1979) has counted 102 deaths of Aborigines in the southwest at the hands of whites between 1826 and 1852. This is certainly an under-estimate as it fails to take into account several recorded attacks on Aborigines. For example, it does not include the unknown number of Aboriginal deaths after soldiers at Perth Barracks repelled an attacking force of 100 Aborigines and drove them to the banks of the Swan River (South West Aboriginal Studies Project).
destruction of their way of life added to their susceptibility to disease. These diseases lay outside the experience of the traditional Aboriginal healers and the settlers made little effort to provide appropriate European treatments or to prevent the spread of disease. One exception was at Northam in 1861 when special camps were set up to isolate and treat Aborigines suffering from measles. While many Aborigines died from the effects of the disease in other parts of the southwest during the same year, only one death was reported from the Northam camps. The cumulative effects of these epidemics on a local Aboriginal population were dramatically expressed by a Pinjarra settler at the turn of the century:

The influenza here about ten years ago took them all or nearly all in this part, half a dozen or so are left. Fifty years ago there were about one hundred Aborigines around Pinjarra now there are about ten.

As Butlin (1982) points out, introduced disease, in particular venereal disease, also contributed to the decrease in the birth rate amongst Aborigines last century. High infant and child mortality rates meant that fewer Aborigines survived to reproductive age, while the spread of venereal disease in the Aboriginal population brought about widespread sterility. This was hinted at by the Registrar General in the 1870 Census when he commented that "the intercourse between their women and Europeans seems to have retarded the increase of population to a very great extent".

The continuation of certain traditional practices in the context of disease, death and destruction of the Aborigines' traditional way of life, further contributed to the decrease in the population. This was noted by several contemporary observers, including the Registrar General who commented in the 1870 Census that the Aborigines'
"traditional rules of marriage, their practice of avenging deaths and their hard and wandering life militated against any increase in their numbers". Given the economic hardships they experienced, it is likely that Aboriginal women, initially at least, continued to regulate the size of their families, while the incidence of disease and death in the Aboriginal population must have precipitated an increase in retributive killings. Fighting over women no doubt increased as their availability was reduced by the demands of European men, while fighting between groups must also have escalated as Aborigines were forced off their land by white settlers and into the territory of neighbouring hostile groups and when Aborigines from different groups were forced to congregate together in central camps.

Despite the marked overall decrease in the Aboriginal population of the full descent, the scant available statistical data suggests that from 1870 the mixed descent population began to show signs of increase. 1,303 Aborigines were counted in the area in 1870 and, as we have seen, this had increased to 1,529 by 1901. Age percentiles for the 1891 Census show that over 50 per cent of the counted Aboriginal population in the south for that year were born between 1870 and 1890. As suggested above, the increase was particularly noticeable in the category designated "half-caste" in the Census. 4.7 per cent of those counted in 1891 were under the age of one and such a percentage is generally accepted as indicating population increase. (By contrast only 1 per cent of the "full blood" category was under the age of one.) Meanwhile the "half-caste" total for the state as a whole in 1901 exceeded that of 1891 by over 65 per cent. This increase appears to have been related to an increasing birth rate in the mixed descent population which was limited in its
effect to some extent by a continuing high death rate, with the measles epidemics of the 1880s\textsuperscript{31} and continuing high infant mortality rates. Nevertheless, the slight overall increase laid the basis for the dramatic growth in the population during the first three decades of this century.

The increase in the birth rate from 1870 was probably due to a range of factors. The dramatic imbalance in the settler sex ratio precipitated by the transportation of convicts from the 1850s no doubt played an important role. As will be discussed later, this was recognised by contemporary observers during the 1870s. It is also likely that the peak of infection by venereal disease began to subside from the 1870s and this was accompanied by a reduction in the incidence of sterility. Butlin (1982) suggests that venereal infections reached a peak in Aboriginal populations over a forty year period and then began to decrease in incidence. Venereal disease was first noted amongst Aborigines in the Swan River Colony in the early 1840s\textsuperscript{32} and then reportedly spread into the southern hinterland in the wake of sandalwood cutters, kangaroo hunters and convicts during the 1850s and 1860s.\textsuperscript{33} Although it was reportedly rife amongst Aborigines in the south during the 1860s,\textsuperscript{34} its incidence had apparently decreased dramatically by the end of the century. A police inspection of Aborigines in the area in 1908 found only a few isolated cases.\textsuperscript{35} The breakdown in traditional marriage arrangements and the system of polygamy reported by several observers during the late nineteenth century\textsuperscript{36} may have also contributed to the increased birth rate. Loss of knowledge of traditional regulatory mechanisms to control the size of families may have also played a role. However it is unlikely that Aboriginal women would have been entirely ignorant of traditional Aboriginal and nineteenth century European practices making for limitation, for example knowledge of the relationship between lactation and
reduced fertility. Contemporary white community attitudes favouring large families and opposed to actions such as abortion and infanticide may have also played a role. It is also likely that continued exposure to introduced diseases together with growing immunity through hybridisation had led to greater immunity in the mixed descent population. At the same time, some families may have benefitted from improved diet, health care and the sedentary lifestyle they chose to follow. The combined influences of these various factors is evident in genealogical records from New Norcia Mission* during the 1890s (see sample genealogical chart opposite).

Migration of Aborigines into the area no doubt also contributed. Drought conditions during the 1870s were said to have forced Aborigines out of the fringes of arid areas to the east and into the southwest, while it was common practice for pastoralists to remove "hand-picked" employees from their properties in the north to work for them on farms in the south. These men and women frequently settled and married in the south. Similarly some prisoners sent from Rottnest Island Prison to serve out their sentences as police trackers in the south chose to remain and marry there.

(ii) Racial Composition

In 1901 there were some 876 persons of mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal descent in the southwest and they formed at least 45 per cent of the total Aboriginal population in the area. First mentioned in the official Census in 1870 in a passing reference to the "numerous half-castes to be found in all parts of the Colony", there were nevertheless unofficial reports of children of mixed descent in the Colony from the early 1840s and it is likely that such births dated from the earliest contacts between Aborigines and Europeans. The sustained increase in the mixed descent population during the late nineteenth century reflected the continuing imbalance

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* For further details on New Norcia Mission see footnote * on page 42.
Aboriginal Genealogy constructed from records of New Norcia Mission

John Walley b 1850/1853 d 1896
m 1870

Mary Francis Mingal b 1854/1856 d 1877
m 1873

Mary Anna Gnoeren b 1851 d 1871

Edward Reese (Esperance Bay)

Nancy Bangalan (Esperance Bay)
m 1877

Mary Rose Wallbangan b 1862

Henry Isaac Shepherd (Albany)

Peter Walley b 1871 d 1871

Mary Magdalene Walley b 1874 d 1874

Agatha Walley b 1875 d 1878
m 1900

Maurice Walley b 1876 d 1879

Julia Reese Valley b 1880 d 1883

Stephan Walley b 1883 1893

Joanne Isaac b 1879

Agatha Walley b 1896 d 1899

Lawrence Walley b 1899 d 1890

Mary Ann Walley b 1892 d 1901

Lgatha Walley b 1894 d 1895

Rosie Walley b 1891

Piney Evelyn Walley Blumenthal

Cyril Walley Lawrence Walley Walley

Harold Elizabeth Walley Walley Phillips

Clarrie Jean Walley Walley Walley Walley

Alphonse Martin Walley Walley Walley

Roscie Walley Tom Corbett Stephen Walley Evelyn Ugle

Mary Ann Walley Lewis Walley Walley Walley

Winnie Jack Walley Richard Walley Violet Walley

Wulmar
of the male:female ratio in the settler population. Unions between persons of the mixed descent as well as with those of the full descent added further to the population.

Miscegenation in the south dates from the beginning of last century when sealing and whaling crews plied the south coast in search of furs, oil and whalebone. Aboriginal oral tradition from the area tells of Aboriginal women being captured off the coast at Esperance, of men swimming ashore and establishing relations with local Aboriginal women and of crew members returning to favourite beaching spots where they had Aboriginal wives and children. The whaling crews' visits were generally brief and intermittent but gangs of sealers were often left in an area for months at a time to hunt. Their contacts with the Aborigines were frequently violent and in 1827 sealers at King George Sound murdered an Aboriginal man and left four others stranded on an island while they abducted their women. During the 1820s, following government intervention in the sealing and mutton birthing industries in Bass Strait, a number of the men involved moved across and settled on the south coast near Esperance. They brought their Aboriginal women with them and also reportedly forcibly took local Aboriginal women. Their "light-skinned children" were reported in the Albany district during the early 1840s. The coast near Busselton was also a popular beaching place for whalers and there are descendants of West Indian whalers and Aboriginal women still living in the southwest today.

There were early accounts from the Swan River Colony of settlers, including young men and older respectable family men, "interfering" with Aboriginal women and complaints were made in the Perth Gazette in 1834 that settlers were getting Aboriginal men drunk and having sexual relations with their women. Early settlers' attitudes to
Group of Aborigines gathered at Guildford on the outskirts of Perth in 1901
casual liaisons with Aboriginal women were grudgingly tolerant, however, they frequently led to violent reprisals from Aboriginal men. A well known instance of this occurred in 1845 when Johnstone Drummond, the son of a prominent settler, abducted an Aboriginal woman and was subsequently speared to death by her husband. (Drummond's death was in turn avenged by a posse of settlers led by his brother.) During the 1840s marriages between young settlers and Aboriginal women were reportedly officially encouraged and it was rumoured that such couples would receive free grants of land from the Governor. This rumour was unfounded, however, and only a few such marriages took place. The first was at the Wesleyan Chapel in Perth in 1845 when an illiterate carpenter, John Stokes, married Eliza Wobart, who had been educated at the Native School established in Perth in 1840 by a Wesleyan missionary, the Reverend John Smithies, for the "Christianising and civilising" of Aboriginal children.

The transportation of British convicts to the Colony between 1850 and 1870 dramatically increased the imbalance in the sex ratio in the settler population. While considerable concern was expressed at the possible repercussions for white women in the Colony, it was in fact the Aboriginal women and, indirectly, their men who were most affected. During this period there were alarming reports of drunkenness and immorality between Aborigines and whites, particularly in the more remote inland areas. The Registrar General noted in the 1870 Census that young Aboriginal girls were going to live at an early age with shepherds and labourers and that they led a life of "constant debauchery". It was widely believed by settlers that Aboriginal women entered willingly into these relationships and observers blamed this on the breakdown in traditional marriage patterns in Aboriginal society. Nevertheless, police records for
the period (see, for example, Occurrence Books from Toodyay Police Station) provide frequent instances of abductions of Aboriginal women by European men. Some permanent relationships were formed during this period. They did not all end happily. During the 1860s an expiree, Joseph Hackett, married an Aboriginal woman from the Albany district and together they set up a farm on a small block of land. Twelve months later the police reported that Hackett had abandoned his wife and that he had been tracked in the bush and speared by her Aboriginal husband.55 No reason was given for the killing but it may have been that the Aboriginal husband had demanded the return of his wife or the fulfilment of some traditional obligatory relationship such as the sharing of food. Hackett had foolishly taken to the bush where he became easy prey for his enemy.

There was also miscegenation between Aboriginal women and non-European men coming into the colony, particularly towards the end of last century. Chinese men from the goldfields in the eastern colonies began to trickle into the southwest during the 1880s and some found employment as cooks and labourers on stations in outlying areas. During the 1890s goldrushes Indian and Afghan camel drivers and itinerant peddlers moved through the far southeast. These men frequently took up with Aboriginal women and several southwest Aboriginal families today trace their ancestry back to them.56

A gradual balancing of the European sex ratio in most parts of the southwest, together with an associated growing opposition to miscegenation on the part of the European community, contributed to a decrease in miscegenation by the end of last century.57 Nevertheless, there were still several white men living with their Aboriginal wives and children on stations in the south at the turn of the century and casual covert sexual relations continued. Biskup
(1973) points out that from this time the population increased largely through unions between persons of mixed descent. However, such unions as well as those between persons of the mixed and full Aboriginal descent had been occurring in the southwest throughout the century. Young Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal people reared at the Benedictine Mission at New Norcia, for example, were strongly encouraged to marry amongst themselves, while those who grew up in camps with their Aboriginal families generally found their partners there. In some instances these partners were originally from other parts of the state, having been brought down by employers to work on farms or stations in the south. These various factors combined to form a racially complex and heterogeneous Aboriginal population of mixed descent in the southwest by the end of last century.

(iii) Population Distribution

The spread of European settlement in the south during the nineteenth century brought major changes in patterns of distribution of the Aboriginal population. Former areas of high Aboriginal population densities, for example riverine estuaries and inland river valleys, were taken over by Europeans for intensive cultivation and settlement and Aborigines were forced off the land and their numbers decimated. By the turn of the century the largest numbers of Aborigines were in the more arid inland areas of pastoral or unalienated Crown land, covering much of today's wheat belt. This pattern can be seen clearly in the table of Aboriginal population by Magisterial district drawn from the 1901 State Census (Table 1 overleaf).

Not surprisingly, the Aboriginal population at the turn of the century was overwhelmingly rural. Only about 8 per cent of the population lived in towns, most of these camping together in fringe
TABLE 1

ABORIGINAL POPULATION BY MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT IN THE SOUTHWEST

(1901 State Census)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackwood</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fremantle</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katanning</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northam</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plantagenet</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sussex</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toodyay</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
camps around the larger towns such as Perth, Fremantle, Bunbury, Busselton and Northam, or living on their employer's land near towns. Beyond the towns, Aboriginal populations were more scattered. Most camped in family groups on station land. They used the homestead as a base where they could find employment and trade or purchase goods, moving out into the bush in small family groups, often for months at a time, to hunt, carry out traditional ceremonies or travel to other stations to find employment. In some instances it appears that the areas in which Aboriginal families travelled (referred to as "runs", see Chapter Four) were based on traditional territorial divisions. Early this century the Mount Barker police reported that one group of families travelled continuously in the area between the Great Southern Railway from Katanning to the coast at Bremer Bay, earning their livelihood by shearing at stations on the way and hunting in the bush. This area corresponds closely with that defined by Tindale (1940) as the territory of the Goreng tribe. In addition, there were also some 200 Aborigines living in missions at the turn of the century in the south. Of these, fifty were in children's missions, the Swan Native and Half-Caste Home in Perth (see page 55 for further details) and Ellensbrook Farm Home near Busselton (see Chapter Two for further details). The remainder lived at New Norcia Mission.

**Aborigines' Role in the Economy**

European settlement also brought major economic changes for Aborigines in the southwest and by the end of the nineteenth century, Aboriginal dependence on the settler economy was substantial.

For much of the nineteenth century, Aborigines attempted to operate within a "dual economy", incorporating their traditional
hunting and gathering adaptation with the exploitation of elements of the settler economy. The degree to which Aboriginal groups could maintain traditional foraging techniques was closely related to the nature of European settlement and land utilisation in their area. Thus Aborigines in areas of close European settlement and intensive cultivation were less able to retain these techniques than those in pastoral areas. The progressive loss and destruction of traditional resources in all areas with the spread of settlement and stock meant that by the end of the nineteenth century, Aborigines were increasingly limited in their ability to maintain themselves by foraging. Nevertheless, it remained an important part of their way of life. Aborigines in the Mandurah district in the 1890s were reported to be dependent for their livelihood on fish caught in traditional weirs or mungah, while those living in fringe camps in Perth still gathered traditional food stuffs to supplement their basic diet of flour, tea and sugar. In less settled areas, such as the upper reaches of the Blackwood and Murray Rivers, small scattered bands of Aborigines travelled and camped in the bush, living on traditional foods and earning a small cash income from selling kangaroo skins and casual work on farms or stations in the area.

From the early days of the Colony, a small number of Aborigines were employed in farm work and in various menial tasks on the farms

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In that year, C. Tuckey of Mandurah informed the Aborigines Department that fish caught from mungah erected across the Serpentine River constituted the main source of subsistence for the twenty or so Aborigines living in the Mandurah district. He strongly objected to the implementation of a Regulation to the 1889 Fishing Act introduced in 1899 which prohibited the use of mungah on the Serpentine River and claimed that as a result Aborigines in the district were starving and being forced to apply for rations (A/655/1899).
and in the towns. This ranged from jobs such as drawing water, chopping wood and gardening to seasonal work harvesting wheat (a largely manual operation for much of last century) and picking grapes, fruit and vegetables to full time employment on dairy farms and in domestic service. Some Aboriginal men worked as trackers and stable hands at local police stations. At first Aboriginal workers were paid in rations for their services, however, it appears that by the 1850s at least they were being paid in cash and this remained the norm. Despite some early initiatives during the 1840s under the official encouragement of Governor Hutt, there was little sustained interest in providing training and education for Aborigines to enable them to take on more skilled work. The Benedictine Mission at New Norcia and a number of small children's missions provided a minimal

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* The New Norcia Benedictine Mission was founded in 1849 by Bishop Salvado to "civilise and Christianise" Aborigines of the Victoria Plains district. It was originally planned to develop along the lines of a Spanish village community with a centralised monastery surrounded by small farms worked by Aboriginal families (Russo, 1980).

** These included the Smithies Wesleyan Mission, established in Perth in 1840. Moved to Wanneroo on the outskirts of Perth in 1845 following several deaths of children at the mission, it was dogged by unsuitable farming land and continuing deaths. In 1851 the mission was moved to York where it was planned to establish married couples on their own small farming blocks. Again the land proved unproductive and an epidemic of measles in the same year caused further deaths. In 1854 the mission was handed over to the government. It was closed in the following year when the parents of the remaining children removed them after an outbreak of dysentery (McNair and Rumley, 1981). In 1842 the Anglican Church opened a school for Aboriginal children in Fremantle. With the commencement of transportation of convicts, Fremantle was deemed to be an unsuitable environment for such a purpose and the mission was closed. At the same time a mission for Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children was opened by the Anglicans at Albany. Children at Annesfield followed the state curriculum. The mission was closed in the early 1870s due to the ill health of its founder, Mrs Camfield (Hasluck, 1942).
education and training in farm and domestic duties for Aboriginal children. While some later found work with government offices (for example as messengers for the Telegraph Office) and, (as will be discussed in Chapter Four) some managed to establish their own farms, most trainees found themselves limited to employment as farm labourers and domestic servants.

Aboriginal workers played a more important role on pastoral stations in the south. The pastoral industry required a high labour input: single families controlled vast tracts of land (often totalling up to 200,000 acres) and leases were generally widely dispersed so as to take up the best pastures and watering areas and to allow for out-pasturing of stock. Stock required strict supervision as there was little in the way of fencing in the south prior to the end of last century.* Isolated from the centres of settlement, station families were also obliged to produce much of their own food stuffs and to be as economically self-sufficient as possible.

Aboriginal labour was used on the stations from the earliest days. This was due in part to isolation and the lack of alternative white workers. However, Aborigines were not simply a convenient and cheap source of labour, as suggested by Berndt (1973), their bush skills and intimate knowledge of the country made them skilled and often valued workers. Many were also excellent horse riders and Hammond recalls that they could "do in the bush and on a horse what a white man could not do".** Having been deprived of the full use of their lands by the establishment of the stations and brought

* Fencing first became obligatory in the south under the 1887 Lands Regulations. However, little effort was made to enforce these Regulations during the late nineteenth century (Erickson, 1971).

** Some skilled Aboriginal horse riders supplemented their income by catching brumbies in the wild forest country of the southwest. The horses were then broken in and sold or retained for their own personal use.
Aboriginal Stockmen, n.d.
into dependence on the station economy for food and clothing in return for their services, most Aborigines made reliable long-term workers, preferring to remain on their land under these conditions to being forced off it altogether. There are numerous examples from the south of Aborigines working for their entire lives for one station owner.*

This paternalistic system (epitomised in the description of station life at Jerramungup near Ravensthorpe by Ethel Hassel [1975]) was based on a fundamental belief in white superiority and supremacy, the acceptance of vastly different living conditions for whites and Aborigines and the prolonged dependency of Aboriginal workers on their white employers.71

Most stations had a central core of permanent Aboriginal workers, together with a floating population of those who assisted in seasonal work and in odd jobs around the homestead. They usually camped some distance from the homestead and were visited from time to time by Aborigines still living in the bush. Aborigines were employed in a variety of jobs on the stations: mustering sheep, cattle and horses; droving stock between outstations and the central homestead; shepherding sheep; delivering food and messages to isolated outcamps; tracking lost stock; and acting as guides. At the home station they were employed in seasonal work such as shearing, harvesting grain crops for local consumption and doing odd jobs such as wood chopping. The women were frequently employed in domestic duties and minding children at the station homestead. Lonely station wives frequently found companionship with these women. Ethel Hassel (1975) lived at Jerramungup Station during the late nineteenth century and she spent many hours with women workers and others from the camp learning about

* Billy Nelly, for example, worked as a shepherd for A. Moir of Glenvale on the far south coast for twenty years before old age forced him to give up work (Mount Barker Police Station, Letter and Report Book, 4/9/1905).
Kimberley station workers employed at
Mooranoppin Station near Kellerberrin, n.d.
their traditions. Aborigines were also employed by station owners or worked on their own initiative in minor cash earning activities such as sandalwood cutting and kangaroo skin hunting. Aboriginal workers on some stations were given considerable responsibility by their employers. When Thomas Muir of Deeside (south of Manjimup) went to work on his brother's station near Eucla between 1873 and 1875, he left his station in the charge of his wife Charlotte and the head stockman, Tommy Mulyet. Shank, the head stockman on the Leake family station Mooranopppin (near Kellerberrin) was frequently placed in charge of droving large flocks of sheep overland from the station to Southern Cross and reportedly never lost a sheep.

The 1890s goldrushes were a "watershed" for the Western Australian economy and the steady demand for supplies in the goldfields provided a much needed boost to the rural economy in the south. Together with the albeit limited success of government initiated land development projects, public works programmes and privately financed railway building projects in the south during the 1890s, this meant that Aborigines in the area could continue to obtain regular employment.* The continued limited nature of rural development in the south also meant that many could still live off the bush.

* Marchant (1981) claims that the range of employment open to Aborigines in Western Australia narrowed rapidly during the 1890s. He attributes this to the combined effects of a surplus of labour due to the 1890s goldrushes, the development of stereotypes of Aborigines as unreliable workers, the growth of trade unions with colour-prejudiced members opposed to Aboriginal membership, the development of union preference in employment, and official policies to keep Aborigines out of towns which served to confine Aborigines to menial farm work. However, these factors do not appear to have been operating on a widespread basis in the south during the 1890s, and Markus (1978) suggests that Marchant may have over-emphasised the hostility to Aborigines from the labour movement during this period. Nevertheless, as will be shown in Chapter Four, these factors were to play a major role in relation to Aboriginal employment in the area from the early 1900s.
Aboriginal family group, Kendenup Station
near Mount Barker, n.d.
At the turn of the century, most Aborigines in the southwest were dependent to some extent on the wider economy. However, contrary to the generally accepted view, they were not, in the main, fringe dwellers living on government hand-outs.* The majority were self-supporting, earning a living through rural employment or living off the bush. The Aborigines Department Annual Report for 1899 records that in the southwest (excluding the south coast), there were 195 Aborigines in employment, 191 receiving relief and 352 self-supporting and "in contact with whites". The 1901 Census records that of 412 Aboriginal "bread-winners" in the southwest, 125 were employed in agricultural work, 120 in domestic service and 118 in the pastoral sector. Records of the Aborigines Department for this period indicate clearly that it authorised rations only for those Aborigines who were destitute or who, through age or some specific debility (for example blindness), were unable to earn their own living.

* Berndt (1973: 53), for example, states that only a few Aborigines in less settled areas of the south were able to find employment. This was with sheep farmers who employed them because they were willing to work for lower wages or rations. Biskup (1973: 42) states that "full-bloods" were not willing to work but preferred to draw government rations while a small number of mission-educated part-Aborigines worked as messengers for the Telegraph Office and as farm labourers and domestics. A handful owned their own farms. Howard (1978/79: 299), while recognising the existence of a "mission-educated elite" who were in employment or self-employed on their own farms, nevertheless states that most Aborigines had been reduced to the status of fringe dwellers with almost no role in the local economy.
Aboriginal Traditions

European settlement and the associated dispossession and de-population of Aborigines in the southwest were accompanied by major changes in Aboriginal cultural and social life. By the end of the nineteenth century some traditional practices had been abandoned altogether or remained only in a fragmentary form while others were retained and adapted to fit the new socio-cultural and environmental context. The apparent breakdown of the formal system of initiation of youths precipitated a loss of knowledge and skills, much of which only endured in passing references in stories and myths. These changes were not uniform in the area, however, and again, change was least drastic in areas of less intensive settlement and cultivation. Pastoralists, for example, showed little inclination to interfere with Aboriginal tradition, being of the opinion that their Aboriginal employees gave "splendid service if rightly treated and [their] tribal laws and customs [were] respected". This contrasted with the situation in towns such as Perth where residents in the 1830s and 1840s objected strongly to Aboriginal retributive killings, nakedness and their carrying of weapons in the vicinity of the town, and in particular, in the few institutions such as New Norcia Mission, which were intended to inculcate European ways in their Aboriginal charges.

Ceremonies (corroborees) were still being held in many parts of the southwest at the end of last century and in Northam in June 1899 over one hundred Aborigines from farms and stations in the surrounding district joined in several days of corroborees at a site on Cemetery Road outside the town. However, it appears that corroborees were often performed for white audiences in order to earn a little extra cash, as in Williams in 1893 when twenty
Aboriginal men of the Gud luduk area, c. 1900
Aborigines danced for a crowd in the main street, while another group put on a display of spear throwing behind the Williams Hotel. 80 Traditional social units also broke down and in many areas became little more than loose social categories. Nevertheless some Aborigines born in the Gnowangerup district early this century recall that they were assigned moiety membership as well as totems which they were forbidden to kill or eat. 81

Kinship remained integral to Aboriginal life. Data collected by Daisy Bates at the Katanning camp in 1911 shows that Aborigines continued to recognise and fulfil obligations to a wide range of kin. 82 As has been indicated, traditional territorial divisions appear to have been maintained in some more remote parts of the south, while place of origin retained an importance throughout the area. This is suggested in the frequent reports of elderly Aborigines making every effort to return to their home districts to die and by the official practice of issuing rations locally due to the Aborigines' "disinclination to leave their particular districts". 83 Totemic sites and sites of significance continued to be observed in some areas: a complex of sites at Mooranoppin (outside Kellerberrin) which held certain sacred ritual items was carefully avoided by young children and women and stories were recounted of the misfortunes suffered by those who failed to show proper respect. 84

Traditional funerals were also still held early this century. In 1903 forty Aborigines gathered at Kendenup (a station near Mount Barker, owned by the Hassell family) for the burial of Jimmy Yerrup 85 (see photograph overleaf) while elderly Aborigines living today, such as Tom Bennell, have vivid memories of traditional funerals they attended during their childhood.* In many areas, deaths continued to be avenged, at least through ritual spearing in the thigh as at

* See oral account in Interview 2, Appendix I.
Jimmy Yerrup's grave at Kendenup, 1905
Mooranoppin Station late last century when an old woman shepherd was speared in the thigh following the death of an Aboriginal man in the main station camp.86

Mubarn men (sorcerers) continued to play a role. Tom Bennell recalls that in the Brookton district early this century they were called in following a death to "fix the person's spirit" so that it would leave "the people alone and so they [could] rest". They were also used to "doctor you up...when you were sick".87 Daisy Bates' notes suggest that in most areas traditional marriage rules had broken down,88 nevertheless, polygamy and ritual spearings of eloping parties continued to be practised in some outlying areas.

Although the manufacture of traditional goods declined as Aborigines became dependent on introduced European items, skills such as the making of spears were maintained in some areas, while others such as the preparation of the traditional buka (cloak) were adapted to make kangaroo skins into rugs for sale to farmers.*

Aborigines and the Wider Community

From the 1870s there was a reawakening of interest in the "Aboriginal question" after some twenty years of official apathy and neglect.89 This was stimulated by accounts of violent clashes between Aborigines and Europeans as a result of pastoral expansion in the north and the concern of some officials and missionaries at the decrease in the Aboriginal population in the southern settled areas and the increase in the number of persons of mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal descent in all parts of the Colony. Reports of the maltreatment of Aborigines by pearling crews, together with the growing dependence of the pastoral industry in the north on Aboriginal

* See oral accounts in Interviews One, Two, Three and Four in Appendix I.
Aborigines at Kuparucne, c. 1900
labour also played a role. Attitudes to Aborigines of the full
descent during this period were coloured by pseudo-scientific
theories of physical and social evolution emanating from Europe and
Britain, in particular, Social Darwinism. These theories and beliefs,
together with the economic self-interest of the colonists, determined
the nature of the wide range of discriminatory legislation and
policies adopted in Western Australia from the 1870s. These laws
and policies steadily eroded the legal rights and status of Aborigines
in the southwest and served to brand them as inferior persons.

Social Darwinism postulated that Aborigines were the least
evolved people in the world and were doomed to pass away. This was
seen to be nobody's fault as such: it was "natural" and "provid-
tential" and an inevitable part of the human evolutionary process. In
the struggle for survival, the "fittest" races survived, while
less evolved races became extinct. A settler writing in the West
Australian in 1880 even gave this belief a theological dimension:

The Almighty Governor of the Universe
has...so directed it, that, in the
fitness of things the black must give
way to the white.

Since the "ultimate extinction" of the Aboriginal race was
"inevitable", there was no apparent means of halting the decline
in the Aboriginal population in the south or stopping the killing
of Aborigines in northern frontier areas. Indeed, as Biskup (1973)
suggests, it could be said that this was the premise on which the
protectionist policies of "smoothing the dying pillow", adopted during
the 1880s, were built. It also influenced the actions of some
Colonial governments in failing to intervene effectively to halt the
situation of violence in the north. This racial philosophy also
reinforced emerging patterns of economic and political power, especially in the pastoral north. Stannage (1984) points out that Social Darwinism went hand-in-hand with economic development in Western Australia and that its variation of the theory of "natural selection" was especially popular with the colony's successful business and pastoral community which by and large did not want the state to intervene to assist others. Social Darwinism also implied that Aborigines were physically and intellectually underdeveloped and inferior in all ways to Europeans. It followed that there was little need to attempt to educate or train such people and it was widely believed that the only way Aborigines learned anything was "through their skins", that is, through physical punishment.

Attitudes to Aborigines of mixed descent were more equivocal. Nevertheless, there was concern amongst some officials and missionaries at their growing presence and their future place in the Colony. This was reflected in the increasing interest in the institutional training of children of mixed descent in missions from the early 1870s and the simultaneous gradual erosion of the legal status of adults, especially those living an Aboriginal lifestyle. Many of the children were "half-British" and it was widely accepted that they had "as great a claim upon the white population as upon the black". It was therefore "beholden" on the colonists to ensure that they did not grow up to follow the ways of their Aboriginal mothers but that they were trained to take their place, albeit lowly, in the Colony as farm workers and domestic servants. Meanwhile, adults of mixed descent were increasingly classified with Aborigines in the discriminatory legislation passed during this period. The largely mission-educated adults living as Europeans, however, tended to be distinguished from other Aborigines of the full and part descent
and exempted from special provisions pertaining to Aborigines. As has been indicated, Biskup (1973) suggests that Aborigines of the part descent were generally unaffected by these special laws prior to the turn of this century. While this appears to have been the case for many of those living a European lifestyle, police and court records suggest that those living with Aborigines were treated accordingly before the law.

Aborigines and Local Courts

The 1870s and 1880s saw the consolidation of a system of unequal justice for Aboriginal persons of the full and part descent in Western Australia. This emerged from the concern of the Colonial Secretary's Office in England (which, acting through governors in the Colony had responsibility for the well-being of the Aboriginal population) and the actions of individual governors to control the state of "unchecked animosities" in northern frontier areas. After an initial brief attempt by Governor Weld during the early 1870s to intervene directly to control the actions of colonists in the north, * legislation was introduced which had the probably unintended effect, initially at least, of allowing for the pacification of Aborigines in the north through the system of local courts. The system of

* In 1872 Governor Weld ordered the arrest of a prominent northwest pastoralist, L.C. Burges, on a charge of shooting with intent to kill. Burges had shot and killed an Aboriginal man allegedly attempting to escape after being taken into custody by Burges for stealing a saddle. Burges was eventually found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. The severity of the sentence caused such an outcry that the Secretary of State in Britain was asked to intervene and it was reduced to one year's imprisonment. Undaunted, Governor Weld issued a general warning to settlers in 1873 that any acts of violence against Aborigines would be punished by law (Hasluck, 1942; Green, 1981). However, this proved an empty threat and no such legal action was taken against colonists by Weld or his successors.
summary jurisdiction through local courts was consistent with the contemporary view that Aborigines were intellectually little more developed than children and that their punishment for "wrong-doing" should be "short and sharp and above all related in the mind of the offender to the crime". This system placed all Aborigines beyond closely settled areas in the Colony in a very unequal position before the law.

In 1874 the system of summary jurisdiction for Aborigines in local courts was strengthened through amendments to an ordinance of 1849 allowing for the summary trial of Aborigines for all offences except murder, arson and rape before a bench consisting of a Resident Magistrate or Protector of Aborigines and one or more Justices of the Peace. From 1874 such offences could be heard, in the absence of a magistrate, before a bench of justices sitting alone. This bench could impose sentences of up to six months' imprisonment. The 1874 amendment also applied to "persons of the half-blood". This was the first reference to persons of mixed descent in the Western Australian Statutes. The 1883 Aborigines Offenders Act consolidated existing judicial practices relating to Aborigines and further strengthened the powers of the local courts. A single justice could now sentence an Aboriginal offender to up to twelve months' imprisonment. As will be discussed later, further powers and harsher penalties were introduced during the 1890s at the initiative of the new colonial government which was dominated by pastoral interests. These were designed to increase the control of pastoralists over their Aboriginal workers.

These laws placed Aborigines at an extreme disadvantage. They rarely had access to legal representation or advice in cases heard locally and they faced justices on the bench who were ignorant of
and had little access to legal niceties and procedures. Local justices were frequently prejudiced against Aboriginal offenders and, as will be discussed later, from 1892 they were empowered to preside over cases in which they had a personal interest. Many justices were also pastoralists and they used their powers to protect their own interests by severely punishing Aborigines for cattle killing and for leaving their place of employment. On the whole, magistrates were little better than local justices and they also frequently bowed to local prejudices and pressures. Nor did Aboriginal offenders have any right of appeal against sentences imposed on them.100

This system of local justice was implemented in outlying areas of the Colony as the interests of the pastoralist establishment required. Although it was not imposed in the south with the same ferocity as in the north, * Aboriginal people there nevertheless experienced the disadvantages of the system. For example, cases involving Aborigines employed by the Dempster family in the Esperance district were heard by the station manager and Aborigines were frequently punished by confinement for several days on small islands off the Esperance coast.101

**Missions and Children of Mixed Descent**

There was a marked revival of mission activity in the Colony from the 1870s. In the south this was expressed in an interest in the education and training of children of mixed Aboriginal and

* Within a year of the passage of the 1883 Aboriginal Offenders Act, the prison population at the Rottnest Island Penal Establishment had doubled. Most prisoners were from the Gascoyne and Murchison areas and had been imprisoned for offences relating to sheep killing (Biskup, 1973).
European descent. The failure of Aboriginal children's missions established in the Colony during the early 1840s, together with the spreading influence of Social Darwinism during the 1870s, led many colonists to believe that Aboriginal children of the full descent were inherently incapable of benefiting from education and that they invariably returned to the "possum and the waddy". On the other hand, there were increasing numbers of children of mixed descent in the camps and they were generally assumed to be capable of benefiting from instruction.

As early as the mid 1860s, the Anglican Bishop, Matthew Hale, began to campaign for the establishment of missions where children of mixed descent, in particular, could be educated and trained in farm and domestic work and in 1871 he opened a small mission in Adelaide Terrace in Perth. This was later moved to the outskirts of Perth and it became known as the Swan Native and Half-Caste Home (SNHC Home). It was the focus of Anglican missionary endeavour in the south until it was closed in 1920. Meanwhile, the large number of deaths at New Norcia Mission during the 1860s had forced Bishop Salvado to change his efforts from "civilising and Christianising" the local Aboriginal population to the institutional care of Aboriginal children from other areas.

The emphasis on the institutional training of Aboriginal children was maintained, despite the passing of the Elementary Education Act in 1870 which made schooling freely available and compulsory for children in the Colony. This Act was not enforced in relation to Aboriginal children (although some did manage to attend state schools) and instead the policy of providing for their education through government subsidised missions was maintained. In 1874 the Charitable Institutions Bill was introduced in the Legislative
Council. It was intended to promote the efficiency of charitable institutions providing for "necessitous children", orphans and "children of Aborigines" by increasing the powers of the managers of these institutions over their charges. In particular, it would empower them to legally retain any children voluntarily surrendered to the institution and to stand in loco parentis to them.\textsuperscript{108} Special reference was made during the debate to the difficulties experienced at New Norcia in retaining children against their will and one member called for the removal of all "half-caste" children from their Aboriginal mothers so as to bring them under the "civilising and Christianising" influence of the missions.\textsuperscript{109}

This suggestion was not incorporated in the resulting 1874 Industrial Schools Act which replaced the 1874 Bill. However, the legislation did take the first steps in the erosion of the powers of Aboriginal parents over their children. Children of Aboriginal descent who voluntarily surrendered themselves or were handed over to the mission by their parents or guardians, were now legally obliged to remain under mission control until they reached the age of twenty-one. In addition, the manager of a mission could place such children in apprenticeships until they turned twenty-one or put them into service for two to five years without gaining the consent of their parents (parental consent was required in the case of European children).\textsuperscript{110}

New Norcia School and Orphanage and the SNHC Home, together with a number of small children's missions established in the Busselton district,\textsuperscript{*} were subsequently registered as Industrial

\textsuperscript{*} These included the Vasse Native and Half-Caste Home established in 1878 outside of Busselton (Busselton Historical Society Records).
Schools under the Act and granted a government subsidy at the daily rate of one shilling per child (this was less than that provided for white children in institutions). The number of children at New Norcia increased steadily from thirty in 1874 to eighty-five by 1893. Children there followed a curriculum designed by Bishop Salvado based on religious instruction and physical work with a rudimentary education in reading and writing. The SNHC Home followed the state curriculum and was regularly inspected by the government Inspector for Schools. However, the children were given only three hours of schooling a day (the rest was spent doing chores), and their teachers must have been hard put to keep up with the demands of the curriculum. The goals of the missions were limited. The SNHC Home promoted training in farm and domestic work and trainees were sent out to service under mission supervision. New Norcia also emphasised vocational training in these areas, however, young adults were encouraged to remain at the mission and to marry and set up small farms of their own on mission land. While some trainees from these missions returned to live with their families in camps in the south, others continued to live apart. They formed a small privileged enclave and many regarded themselves as separate from the rest of the Aboriginal population in the south.

**Policies of Protection: "Smooth the Dying Pillow"**

The concern of some officials and missionaries at the depopulation of Aborigines in settled areas and the Social Darwinism theory of the inevitability of this process were behind the protectionist policies adopted in Western Australia during the late nineteenth century. Essentially, these policies meant that the colonial
government did little more than provide at a rudimentary level for the physical needs of Aborigines so as to make their "passing" as "comfortable" as possible. As Stannage (1984) comments, it is "scarcely surprising" that Aboriginal writers such as Jack Davis have subsequently observed that:

This "dying pillow" concept was to do more harm to the future generations of Aborigines than the genocidal practices of the past.116

The first step in this process of "smoothing the dying pillow" was incorporated in the 1872 Land Regulations which empowered the Governor to reserve areas of land for the "use and benefit" of Aborigines.117 Essentially, in the south, these were to be areas where the process of "extinction" could be completed "peaceably and at a distance".118 (This provision probably also reflected the revival of mission activity in the Colony during the 1870s and 1880s. Certainly, missionary bodies were the first to benefit from it.)*

Concern amongst some officials reflecting possible reactions from Britain at the number of Aboriginal deaths in the south during the measles epidemics in the early 1880s (37 Aboriginal prisoners died at Rottnest in 1883 alone)119 and at the maltreatment of Aboriginal workers in the pastoral and pearling and bêche-de-mer industries in the north prompted the appointment of the first inquiry in Western Australia into the conditions of Aborigines in 1883.120 The Inquriy, led by John Forrest, then Surveyor General and Commissioner of Crown Lands (later to become the first Premier of Western Australia in 1890)** was to inquire into and make recommendations

* For further details on reserves granted between 1872 and 1900 see Appendix II.

** For further biographical details on John Forrest see Chapter Two.
concerning conditions at Rottnest Prison and certain other matters relating to Aboriginal people generally. These included the existing system of relief for sick and elderly Aborigines and the advisability of establishing "native centres and stations" as had been done in the other colonies.  

The resulting Report, tabled in 1883, dealt in some depth with conditions at Rottnest but passed lightly over the "other matters". It strongly reflected Forrest's own personal views and concerns and served to confirm contemporaries' beliefs in the "ultimate demise" of the Aboriginal race and their inherent inability to become civilised. It also supported the "practical view of the day" that Aborigines should be "kindly treated" through the issue of relief (rations, blankets, clothing and tents) and the provision of medical care for the elderly and sick. Administratively, the Report recommended that the existing system whereby Resident Magistrates and police officers supervised the issue of relief be abandoned and replaced by a Board responsible for the supervision and organisation of relief and the supervision of the use of Aboriginal reserves. At the local level the Board would rely on the continued assistance of government officers. The Report had little to say about the establishment of "native stations" although it did recommend that further land be set aside for the "amelioration of the natives". In addition, it recommended that missions be liberally subsidised to provide for the "useful instruction" of Aboriginal children. The Report concluded that there was "no hope that the Aboriginal native [would] ever become more than the servant of the white man". The Report also recommended that protection to Aborigines in employment be extended. *

* A series of legal measures were introduced between 1871 and 1875 to protect Aborigines in northern coastal areas from kidnapping and fraudulent enticement onto pearling and bêche-de-mer boats and to prevent the abuse of Aboriginal workers in these industries (Biskup, 1973; Marchant, 1981).
The recommendations of the Inquiry were incorporated in the Aborigines Protection Bill together with a number of provisions taken from the 1869 Protection and Management of the Natives of Victoria Act and from existing Statutes pertaining to Aborigines in Western Australia.*

The Bill was already drafted when the "Gribble Affair" erupted in Western Australia, although earlier correspondence between the figure at the centre of this controversy, the Reverend J.B. Gribble, and Governor Broome concerning the exploitation of Aboriginal labour in the north had played an important part in setting the Bill in train. In 1886 Gribble, outraged at the treatment of Aborigines by settlers and police in the Gascoyne district where he had been sent to establish an Anglican mission, published a pamphlet, Dark Deeds in Sunny Lands, in which he made serious allegations of cruelty to Aborigines by settlers and police. In particular, he condemned the use of neck chains on Aboriginal prisoners, the injustices of the local courts and the conditions of Aborigines employed by pearling crews and pastoralists. Although many of these matters had already been raised in the Legislative Council, the publication of these allegations by an "outsider" caused a furore. Gribble was heatedly challenged by the settlers and, following an unsuccessful libel case against the proprietors of the West Australian newspaper, he left the Colony in disgrace and returned to Victoria where he continued to publicly berate the actions of the settlers of the northwest.  

The Aborigines Protection Bill was tabled in 1886. It was intended to:

* For example, the provision introduced in the 1840s restricting the entry of armed or "indecently dressed" Aborigines to towns was retained in the 1886 Bill.
...provide for the better protection and management of the Aboriginal natives of Western Australia, and to amend laws relating to certain contracts with such aboriginal natives.

Hasluck (1942) states that the ensuing debate on the Bill was predominantly concerned with developing a "working arrangement" in relation to the employment of Aborigines which would suit the needs of pastoralists in the north in particular. There was little concern with legal principle and little interest in providing more than minimal assistance and "protection" for Aborigines. The resulting 1886 Aborigines Protection Act was the first piece of consolidated legislation of its type in Western Australia, although similar legislation existed in other colonies. It was divided into five major parts. The first dealt with the powers and duties of the Aborigines Protection Board. The members of the Board were to be appointed by the Governor and their duties were: to supervise the distribution of relief and the provision of medical care to needy Aborigines; to advise the Governor on the "proper care" of Aboriginal children; to supervise Aboriginal reserves; to report on the condition of Aborigines in the colony; and to exercise a "general supervision and care over all matters affecting Aborigines". At the local level, the Board was to be assisted by Honorary Protectors appointed by the Governor. The remaining sections of the Act were concerned with contracts of employment for Aboriginal workers, apprenticeships for Aboriginal children, the employment of Aboriginal prisoners outside of jails, and a miscellaneous section which included a clause empowering Justices of the Peace to order Aborigines out of towns. The definition of "Aboriginal" was drawn from the 1869 Victorian legislation:
every Aboriginal native of Australia and every Aboriginal half-caste or child of a half-caste, such half-caste or child habitually associating with Aborigines.

The inclusion under the Act of adults of the "half-blood" and children of half or less than "half-blood" marked a further step in the reduction of their legal status and brought them further under the control of the government.

The establishment of the Aborigines Protection Board marked the first major step in the formalisation and centralisation of the administration of Aboriginal affairs in the Colony. Initially, at least, the Board's members (who included prominent government officials, amongst them the Colonial Secretary, and professional non-government persons with experience of Aborigines), worked in closely with the executive and legislative branches of the government. Its official members could justify policy decisions in the legislative body when called upon to do so and in the executive they could relate Aboriginal policy to general administrative procedures.\textsuperscript{128} Although the Governor continued to draw on the Colonial Office for guidance in policy, the establishment of the Board did give the colonists an increased role in the application of this policy locally. Under the direct supervision of the Governor the Board also carried out a range of administrative tasks relating to the provision of welfare to Aborigines. A network of protectors (mainly government officers such as Resident Magistrates and police, together with a number of missionaries, clergy and settlers) were to carry out the Board's functions locally. They were mainly concerned with issuing rations and were expected to oversee service contracts between Aborigines and their employers as required.
The employment provisions in the Act did little to improve conditions for Aboriginal workers however. They did not prohibit employment without contract but merely stipulated the conditions under which a contract should be made to be legally binding. The Chief Protector of Aborigines, H.C. Prinsep, told the Roth Royal Commission in 1904 that only one-twelfth of known Aboriginal workers were employed under contract. He knew of no prosecutions of employers, while between 1901 and 1904 twenty Aborigines were convicted for breaches of contract. Meanwhile, the provisions in the Act relating to the apprenticeship of Aboriginal children did little more than legitimise a system of child slavery in which children could be apprenticed from the age of six until they turned twenty-one. Employers were under no obligation to provide even minimum standards of training and living conditions, while children faced imprisonment if they attempted to leave their employers or failed to carry out their orders.

**Responsible Government and Aborigines**

In 1889 Western Australia was granted responsible government by the British Crown. However, due to the Colony's poor record in its treatment of Aborigines (highlighted during the "Gribble Affair" in 1886), the Colonial Office retained control over Aboriginal affairs under Section 70 of the 1889 Constitution Act. This section also specified that a minimum of £5,000 or 1 per cent of the colonial gross revenue, whichever was greater, was to be granted annually for Aborigines in the state. There was considerable opposition to this remaining vestige of Imperial control from the state's new Parliament and, as the Colony's revenue expanded with the advent
of the 1890s goldrushes, there was open resentment at the sum obliged to be set aside for Aborigines. As a consequence, strong pressure was exerted on the British government during the 1890s to remove Section 70 from the Constitution. At the same time the state government introduced a range of harsh laws which severely reduced the rights of Aboriginal people and which served to indicate the type of treatment Aborigines could expect under state control.

Initially, Section 70 (S.70) proved a boon to the Aborigines Protection Board and as its funding expanded (reaching £16,956 in 1897) it was able to improve its welfare service to Aborigines. However, the Board was to become the scapegoat in the battle to amend the Constitution and a growing lack of cooperation from the state government during the 1890s prevented it from executing its duties as capably as it might have. This served to disadvantage Aboriginal people dependent on its services.

Premier Forrest led the campaign against the Board, despite his own involvement in its establishment. He persistently accused the Board of administrative and financial mismanagement and of being over-zealous in the distribution of rations to Aborigines. This, he maintained, was making Aborigines "lazy" and was contributing directly to their pauperisation. In 1892 he recommended the Board's immediate abolition in a memorandum to the Governor, warning that if his appeal was not accepted a Bill for the Board's abolition would be placed before Parliament each year until this object had been achieved. In changing his position in relation to the Board, Forrest was succumbing to the political pressures of the time. He commanded no political party or faction within government but relied on personal loyalties of friends and supporters. He had considerable

* Revenue increased from £497,670 in 1891 to £2,875,396 in 1900 (Battye, 1912/13).
difficulty in controlling his supporters and in preventing them from disintegrating into competing regional interest groups. He was therefore obliged to respond to their pressures to remove the Board.\textsuperscript{134} He responded similarly to pressure from the powerful pastoralist lobby during the 1890s for the introduction of harsh legislation to control Aboriginal workers, despite his own stated sympathy for their plight.

A Bill allowing for the abolition of the Board and S.70 was passed by both Houses of Parliament in 1893 but was subsequently refused Royal Assent. The battle raged on until 1897 when a further Bill was passed and Forrest personally took the legislation to Britain to ensure that assent was granted.\textsuperscript{135} The Aborigines Act of 1897\textsuperscript{136} abolished the Aborigines Protection Board, repealed the financial provisions and transferred control of Aboriginal affairs to the Western Australian government.\textsuperscript{**} As will be demonstrated in the following chapter, this was to prove a retrogressive step in the provision of welfare services to Aborigines in Western Australia.

As has been indicated, the pastoralist lobby used its considerable influence in the Western Australian Parliament during the 1890s to bring about the introduction of a series of harsh laws intended to pacify Aborigines in the north and to strictly control

\textsuperscript{*} McLeod (1984) raises doubts as to the legality of Forrest's actions and questions whether Royal Assent was in fact granted. Rather, he suggests that Forrest simply reached a private agreement with the Secretary of State in Britain, Lord Chamberlain. However, the Debates of the House of Commons show clearly that in 1897 Chamberlain placed on the table of the House an order revoking the liability of the West Australian government for making the one per cent contribution. This order went unnoticed and unchallenged and accordingly became law. In the following year the revocation was questioned by Irish and radical members of the House, but Chamberlain simply replied that the change had been presented in the normal fashion and accepted without objection. Of course this technique was adopted to avoid any controversy (Bolton, private communication).

\textsuperscript{**} It was subsequently discovered that, due to a series of irregularities in its proclamation, the 1897 Act was in fact legally invalid. As will be discussed in the following chapter, the Western Australian government legislated retrospectively to rectify this in 1905.
those employed in the pastoral industry. To this end, the 1886 Aborigines Protection Act was amended in 1892 to allow for up to three months' imprisonment for Aborigines breaking employment contracts. At the same time Aboriginal workers were specifically excluded from the provisions of the Master and Servants Act and were thereby deprived of access to legal redress against their employers under the terms of this Act. Maximum fines of £20 included in the 1892 amendments for employers breaking terms of contracts were little more than window-dressing as few local benches were likely to find against white employers. It should be noted that at the same time as these amendments were being introduced, the Forrest government, under pressure from the growing union lobby in the state with the advent of the goldrushes, was progressively amending the Masters and Servants Act to remove injustices against employees and to place them on a footing of equality with employers in relation to broken contracts.

Major amendments were also made to the 1883 Native Offenders Act during the 1890s. In 1892 the whipping of Aboriginal offenders (abolished in 1883) was reintroduced and Justices of the Peace were empowered to impose sentences of whipping. In the following year an earlier disqualification precluding local justices from adjudicating in cases in which they had a personal interest was removed from the Statutes. Sentences which could be imposed were also increased and from 1893 Resident Magistrates could impose sentences of up to three years on Aboriginal offenders. Offenders with a previous conviction could be sentenced to a maximum of five years' imprisonment with or without whipping. These amendments represented the nadir for Aborigines in the system of local courts in Western Australia and, as will be discussed in the following chapter, they were to
provide ammunition for the political opponents of the pastoralist lobby early this century.

Aborigines of the full and part descent were also discriminated against in several minor sections of other Acts passed or amended during the late 1880s and the 1890s. In 1893 the Constitution Act was amended to exclude from the franchise all Aborigines of the full and part descent with the exception of those who owned a freehold estate valued at £50 or more for over six months. This effectively disenfranchised all persons of Aboriginal descent since only two or three owned freehold land during the 1890s.¹⁴² In 1898 Aborigines of the full descent were excluded from the state census on the grounds that it would not be possible to accurately enumerate their population.¹⁴³ However, under the 1887 Land Regulations and the 1898 Land Act Aborigines and their descendants could be granted up to two hundred acres by the Governor under any conditions he wished to impose. There were no legal impediments on Aborigines applying for land under the general provisions of the Land Act, but their applications for land were generally treated as applications under these special Regulations. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, land was generally granted under reserve status and this was to create insurmountable difficulties for the Aboriginal farmers.

**Conclusion**

The Aboriginal people in the southwest at the turn of the century had managed to survive some seventy years of dispossession and depopulation. They had retained a degree of economic independence, their population was on the increase and they were able to follow a variety of lifestyles incorporating varying elements of European and traditional Aboriginal. However, they stood poised on the brink
of a major period of change in their way of life. This stemmed from
the repercussions of economic and demographic changes in Western
Australia during the 1890s and the handing over of Aboriginal affairs
to the Colonial government. In particular, the process of reduction
of the legal status of persons of the full and part descent, begun
during the 1870s and which was already advanced in reference to the
justices and magistrates courts in particular, was to be dramatically
accelerated during the early years of this century.
FOOTNOTES – Chapter One

5. Eyre, 1845.
11. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
15. Tilbrook, 1983.
17. Hasluck, 1942; Appleyard, 1981.
22. Hasluck, 1942.
24. Bates, D., Transcripts of Collected Papers...
27. W.A. Census, 1870: 27.
29. W.A. Census, 1870, 1901.
30. W.A. Census, 1891.
31. Hasluck, 1942.
32. Ibid.
33. W.A. Census, 1870.
34. Ibid.
35. AF/2463/1908.
36. See for example the W.A. Census, 1870.
40. Leake family papers.
41. W.A. Census, 1901.
42. W.A. Census, 1870: 28.
44. South West Aboriginal Studies Project.
45. Green, 1981.
47. Busselton Historical Society Records.
49. Hasluck, 1942.
50. Green, 1981.
51. Hasluck, 1942.
52. McNair and Rumley, 1981.
56. South West Aboriginal Studies Project.
59. W.A. Census, 1901.
60. Mount Barker Police Station Records.
61. AR/1899.
63. A/655/1899.
64. Bates, D., Transcripts of Collected Papers...
65. AR/1899.
67. Hasluck, 1942.
70. Hammond, 1933: 74.
71. Fink, 1960.
74. Leake, 1950.
75. Howard, 1981.
76. Ibid.
79. A/588/1899.
80. Cowen, n.d.
81. Lancel Williams, Interview 7, Appendix I.
82. Bates, D., Transcripts of Collected Papers....
83. Twentieth Century Impressions of Western Australia.
84. Cliff Humphries, Interview 6, Appendix I.
86. Leake family papers.
87. Tom Bennell, Interview 2, Appendix I.
88. Bates, D., Transcripts of Collected Papers....
89. Hasluck, 1942.
92. WA 27/8/1880.
94. Annesfield, 1858.
95. Hasluck, 1942.
96. Marchant, 1981.
97. Ibid: 36.
98. 38 Vict., No. 8.
99. 47 Vict., No. 8.
100. Marchant, 1981.
102. Hasluck, 1942.
103. WA 27/8/1880.
104. PG September–November 1865.
108. PG 15/7/1874; Tay, 1957.
109. PG 15/7/1874.
110. 38 Vict., No. 11.
118. Ibid: 16.
119. Hasluck, 1942.
120. Ibid; Biskup, 1973.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid.
126. Ibid; Green, 1981.
127. 50 Vict., No. 25.
129. Roth Royal Commission, 1905.
133. Marchant, 1981.
136. 61 Vict., No. 5.
137. Hasluck, 1942.
138. Ibid.
139. vanden Driesen, 1981.
140. 55 Vict., No. 18.
141. 56 Vict., No. 15.
143. W.A. Census, 1901.
CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

The period from 1898 to 1905 saw major changes in official policy in Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia. This reflected a move from an official indifference to the situation of Aborigines, epitomised by the protectionist policies of the late nineteenth century, to an official intention to intervene directly to improve their situation by means of a policy combining the aims of protection, exclusion and segregation of Aborigines. When Western Australia first assumed responsibility for Aboriginal affairs in 1898 it maintained the existing policy. However, its relevance was increasingly questioned both by the head of the new Aborigines Department, Charles Henry Prinsep, and by a growing number of goldfields politicians. Influenced by reports of deteriorating conditions of Aborigines following the spread of settlement into remote areas and by trends in policy in other states, Prinsep advocated the introduction of measures to segregate Aborigines from the wider community in order to halt the decline in their numbers. He also expressed concern at the number of children of mixed Aboriginal and European descent growing up in Aboriginal camps and recommended the introduction of legislation to remove them to missions where they could be trained and eventually absorbed into the wider community. The goldfields politicians objected to the treatment of Aborigines in the pastoral industry and to the employment of Aborigines in place of white workers and they mounted a concerted campaign for an independent inquiry into the conditions of Aborigines in the north of the state. The government did not at first respond to the demands of the adminis-
trators. However, when criticisms of the treatment of Aborigines
in the north spread to the national level and to the British press, it finally agreed to the appointment of the Roth Royal Commission. This led directly to the passing of the 1905 Aborigines Act which incorporated Prinsep's demands for the segregation of Aborigines and controls over their children, and those of the goldfields politicians for increased "protection" of Aboriginal workers. Aborigines in the south were also affected by the new policy. Biskup (1973) and Bolton (1971) state that this was largely unintended and that the whole thrust of the Act and the debate which preceded it was towards Aborigines of full descent in the north. However, there was considerable pressure from within the administration to extend controls over persons of mixed Aboriginal descent throughout the state, particularly children, and this found general support in Parliamentary debates on the Bill. This pressure, which reflected hardening attitudes to such persons, had important implications for Aborigines in the south. Together with persons of full descent, they found themselves stripped of their rights as citizens and deprived of the power to direct the course of their own lives. They were now subject to a wide range of repressive controls which affected virtually all aspects of their lives.

**The Aborigines Department**

The Western Australian government assumed responsibility for the administration of Aboriginal affairs from the British government in April 1898 and in that month the Aborigines Department superseded the Aborigines Protection Board as the body providing limited protection and distributing relief to Aborigines throughout the state. Under the 1897 Aborigines Act, the Department was to function as a sub-department under the direct control of a 'responsible Minister
of the Crown' and, following the repeal of s. 70 of the Constitution Act (which had guaranteed the Board an annual grant of £5,000 or 1 per cent of the annual gross state revenue), it was to receive a minimum annual grant of £5,000.¹

There were few other changes. Like the Board, the Department was required by law to carry out the following duties: provide relief and medical care to needy Aborigines; manage and regulate the use of Aboriginal reserves; protect Aborigines from injustice and fraud; and exercise a general supervision over all matters affecting Aborigines in the state. It had the additional duty of providing for the education and maintenance of Aboriginal children (the Board had only been required to advise the governor on these matters). At the local level these duties were to be discharged through honorary protectors, appointed 'from time to time' by the governor. The Department had no special legal powers over Aborigines, although the local protectors continued to exercise a supervisory role in the employment of Aborigines. Such powers were contained in a range of general statutes and were enforced by the police and the local courts.

The Aborigines Department was small, starved of resources and on the lowest rungs of the public service hierarchy. Established as a sub-department of Treasury, it had a staff of three: the Chief Protector of Aborigines, a secretary (dispensed with in 1899 following the appointment of a Travelling Inspector to the Department) and a general clerk. In its first year the Department received a grant of £5,000 and although this had increased to £14,064 by 1905, it was still considerably less than the £16,456 expended by the Board during its final year of operation. The low priority accorded to the Department was reflected in a Report of the Royal Commission
into the Public Service in 1903. The Commissioner recommended a drastic cut in the salary of the Chief Protector (from £550 to £350) on the grounds that his duties and responsibilities did not justify the former high salary, and the immediate dismissal of the Travelling Inspector whose duties, it was thought, could be executed more effectively by stipendiary magistrates assisted by the police. ²

The situation of the state’s estimated twenty to twenty-three thousand Aborigines varied enormously. In the south there was a small, predominantly part-Aboriginal population which was largely self-supporting. Only a small number of elderly and destitute adults and children in missions required the assistance of the Department. However, there were alarming reports of social breakdown and demoralisation amongst Aborigines who had established fringe camps on the goldfields following the gold rushes of the 1890s. This was evidenced by increasing drunkenness, miscegenation, venereal disease and morbidity in the camps. There were similar reports from the Kimberley and Pilbara coastal areas where Asian boat crews were said to be leaving a trail of human misery in their wake. ³ Aborigines were a vital part of the pastoral industry in the north west and the Kimberley. As will be discussed later, from the 1890s there were allegations of cruelty and abuse of Aboriginal workers in the industry and public criticism of the system of regulating the employment of Aborigines through police, pastoralists and local courts. Meanwhile, Aborigines in the northern Kimberley and the remote desert areas of the state continued to follow a traditional lifestyle largely uninfluenced by white settlement. These were all areas in which the Department could conceivably be called upon to play a role, although given its limited powers, low funding and inadequate administrative structure, it could hardly be expected to have much impact.
The Administrators

The Premier and Colonial Treasurer (Sir) John Forrest was in charge of the Department from 1898 to 1901. His decision to take on this additional portfolio reflected his intention to closely control the administration of Aboriginal affairs during the early years of state responsibility. He was also personally interested in Aboriginal affairs and had a reputation as an expert in the area. After the events of the 1890s, discussed in the previous chapter, it was in the state's interests in its relations with Britain that the administration should run smoothly and it was also important for Forrest's own reputation given his role in persuading the British government to transfer control over Aboriginal affairs to the state and in the abolition of the Aborigines Protection Board and the repeal of s.70 of the Constitution Act. He now took it upon himself to ensure that the British government would have no grounds for criticising the new state government administration. He was well placed to do so as Minister under the administrative arrangements of the 1897 Aborigines Act and, to further consolidate his position, he appointed a family friend, Henry Charles Prinsep, as Chief Protector of Aborigines.

Forrest was one of the most powerful figures in Western Australia at the turn of the century. Of humble origins (his father came to Australia as a servant and established a farm at Picton near Bunbury where Forrest was born in 1847), Forrest had made his way quickly in the colony rising to prominence through his exploratory expeditions into the arid interior during the 1860s and 1870s and his skills as a forceful and efficient administrator in the Department of Lands and Surveys. He also married well: his wife came from
the Hammersley family of Guildford which "stood on the front ranks of the Western Australian territorial and social elite". In 1883 Forrest was appointed Surveyor General and Commissioner of Crown Lands and was also granted a seat in both the Executive and Legislative Councils. As has been indicated, he became Western Australia's first Premier in 1890 and retained this position until 1901 when he left to take up a seat in the newly formed Commonwealth Parliament.

Forrest's knowledge of Aboriginal ways stemmed from his childhood in the Picton district when there were still appreciable numbers of Aborigines in the area. Many worked for local farmers: Forrest's father employed an Aboriginal stockman, Tommy Pierre, for twenty-five years and Ngilgie, a forceful woman from the Augusta district, also worked for the Forrest household. On his later exploratory expeditions, Forrest was always accompanied by Aboriginal men skilled in bush survival (Tommy Pierre accompanied him on two expeditions). His indebtedness to these men in surviving the rigours of these expeditions is recorded in his journals and Forrest also recognised this by maintaining contact with the men over the years. Thus William Noongale Kickett, who accompanied Forrest on his overland expedition from Perth to Adelaide in 1870, was granted a special ration issue for himself and his wife on Forrest's orders, and when Kickett died suddenly in 1904 Forrest had a tombstone erected in his memory.

These experiences endowed Forrest with a sympathy for Aborigines and he was fond of reminding his colleagues that "as the first possessors of the land" Aborigines deserved "something better than repression". He was also said to have made himself accessible at the stables behind his home in Perth to "any aborigine with a real grievance". Nevertheless, this sympathy was overlaid with a mixture of paternalism and "benevolent imperialism and British superiority"
typical of his peers. As a student at Bishop Hale's school in Perth it was instilled in Forrest that

...the blacks were a long way down the ladder of God's creation and that the British had, in consequence, affected a salutary reduction in the forces of barbarism in the world by taking on the weighty burden of governing much of Asia, Africa and Australia.

During debate on the Aboriginal Native Offenders Bill in 1883 Forrest told the Legislative Council that Aborigines were "to a great extent like children" and that, rather than increasing terms of imprisonment, under the Act, it would be "kinder" and "more efficacious" to "chastise them...like one would whip a bad child". Forrest had little regard for Aboriginal traditions or their way of life, rather he regarded it as the antithesis of all that he valued in 'British civilisation'. Thus his analysis of Aboriginal society presented to the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science in 1890, was based on its supposed "evolutionary inferiority, isolation, lack of innovation and inability to produce a leader". Forrest also showed a ready willingness to abandon his stated views on the treatment of Aborigines to suit his own political ends. During the 1890s he submitted to pressure from the pastoral lobby to introduce harsh terms of imprisonment for Aborigines and, in his efforts to do away with s.70 of the Constitution Act (and the associated drain of state funds to Aboriginal affairs), he totally abandoned his original support for the Aborigines Protection Board.

Forrest had played a major role in the formulation of the protectionist policies of the 1880s, both through his position as Commissioner of the 1883 Inquiry into the Condition of Aborigines in the Colony and in subsequent debate on the Aborigines Protection
Bill. During his ministry the Department continued to follow the non-interventionist approach of the Board. Predicated on a belief in the inevitable extinction of the Aboriginal race, this policy obviated the need to take any positive action apart from providing for the physical needs of Aborigines and making their 'passing' as 'comfortable' as possible. Forrest wrote in 1900 that it was "useless thinking of doing much for the grown-ups and elderly people except to feed them and attend to them when they [were] sick". As for the young people, he had little faith in their educability and, in contrast with the Colonial Office, shared the view of many of his colleagues that the practical value of the missions in training children was negligible. In 1900 he suggested that they would be best catered for in a

...central station where they could be free from want and demoralising influences and a good way from town, with land fit for cultivation....This would be a good place to start. Where they could marry and settle down....To this place the young men and women would gladly come."

Forrest refused to address the broader issues relating to Aborigines and instead devoted himself to reducing expenditure on relief and cutting back the mission subsidies. He was determined to prove his earlier claims that the high levels of expenditure under the Board were unwarranted and that Aborigines could be adequately provided for within the bounds of the Department's limited annual grant. This would act to substantiate his criticisms of the Board and his argument for doing away with s.70 of the Constitution Act.

Prinsep was appointed Chief Protector of Aborigines in 1898 and held this position until his retirement from the public service in 1907. There was little in his background to recommend him for
the position. He had no previous experience in the administration of Aboriginal affairs and his involvement with Aborigines was limited to experience with those in the Bunbury and Busselton districts in the south at a time when the major problems facing the Aborigines Department lay in the north and the goldfields. He was a poor administrator and his ineptitude as Under Secretary of the Mines Department during the 1890s had attracted considerable public criticism which contributed to his transfer to the relatively minor post of Chief Protector. Henry Daglish (Labor, Subiaco) told the Legislative Assembly in 1901 that Prinsep's appointment showed that the government considered

...anyone...good enough to look after natives. If an officer is to be dispensed from the Mines Department...and there is no vacancy available the Government have said 'Oh. Let him go to the Aborigines Department where he cannot be much harm and where the blacks will not have a chance of making complaint'.

As already mentioned, Prinsep's appointment was also a manoeuvre by Forrest to consolidate his personal control over the Aborigines Department.

Prinsep came from a privileged and cultivated background. He was born in Calcutta in 1844, the son of the Advocate General in the Bengal government, and like other sons of the British Raj was sent to England to be educated. There he came under the influence of his uncle, Henry Prinsep, a prominent patron of the arts, at whose home the young Prinsep met many famous artists and writers of the Victorian era including the future Poet Laureate, Lord Alfred Tennyson, who became a life-long friend. On leaving school, Prinsep decided on a career as an artist and he left England to study painting on the continent. However, his studies were interrupted by the death
Chief Protector of Horticultu and staff c. 1900

H.C. Pursey
of his father and in 1866 he was sent by his family to inspect properties belonging to his father's estate in Singapore and Western Australia.\(^4\)

Prinsep had not intended to remain in Western Australia but soon after his arrival he met Josephine Bussell, the daughter of a well-known pioneering family in the Vasse district of the southwest. After an 'ideal Victorian courtship' they married and settled at Prinsep Park near Dardanup. Like many other settlers in the district, Prinsep employed Aborigines on his property, and a list of his Aboriginal employees in 1868 included a horsebreaker, a stock rider, and others employed in minding pigs, gardening and in various household chores.\(^5\) During the 1870s Prinsep developed an interest in the situation of part-Aborigines in the Bunbury district and was instrumental in the establishment of a committee to assist in their care.\(^6\)

In 1874 financial difficulties, partly caused by his own mis-management, forced Prinsep to abandon Prinsep Estate and he moved to Perth where he joined the Department of Lands and Surveys as a draughtsman and clerk. Through his wife's family Prinsep had connections with many of the Establishment families in the colony and, despite continuing financial difficulties, he and his wife mixed in the upper levels of Perth society. They were accepted at Government House and for a time Prinsep was a member of the exclusive Weld Club. Prinsep's talents and cultivated background also provided him with a ready entrée into polite society. He took part in amateur theatricals, gave lessons to ladies dabbling in watercolours and sketching and was an active member of the Wilgie Sketching Club (a coterie of artistically minded Perth gentry), along with Margaret Forrest, the wife of John Forrest. He was also a talented amateur
photographer and writer of mediocre love poetry dedicated to his wife Josephine. The Prinsep and Forrest families were close: Josephine Prinsep and Margaret Forrest, both daughters of prominent settler families, had been friends since their youth and Prinsep and Forrest had struck up an acquaintance during Prinsep's days in the Bunbury district where the Forrest family also owned land. During the 1870s and 1880s Forrest and Prinsep both worked in the Department of Lands and Survey in Perth, Prinsep remaining in minor clerical positions while Forrest rose quickly through the ranks to achieve the position of Surveyor General and Commissioner for Crown Lands in 1883. In his diaries Prinsep records frequent visits between the Forrest and Prinsep households (both located in the centre of Perth), however family reminiscences suggest that the strong bond of friendship lay between the wives and that Forrest largely tolerated Prinsep as a long-time family acquaintance and junior colleague. Certainly the great dissimilarity in their backgrounds and interests meant that they had little in common.

The Prinseps continued to make regular visits from Perth to the Bussell family home, Cattle Chosen, near Busselton, and kept in touch with news about local settlers and Aborigines. The Bussells were regular employers of Aborigines and had long-established ties with many of the local families. Prinsep occasionally received visits in Perth from Aborigines formerly employed at Prinsep Estate or at Cattle Chosen. The visit of Jack Querring, who found a pound note in an old pair of trousers given to him by Prinsep's wife and took it upon himself to return the money, provided Prinsep with a favourite anecdote to illustrate the honesty of the 'natives'.

Prinsep fared little better in the public service than he had as a gentleman farmer and by 1884 had only risen to the minor post
of Chief Clerk in the Department of Lands and Surveys. During the late 1880s he began to look around for a more important and remunerative position. He had little success: in 1887 he applied for the relatively minor position of Resident Magistrate in Busselton only to be informed that there were others with prior, more legitimate claims to the position.\textsuperscript{20} In 1893 an opportunity presented itself with the creation of the Department of Mines. Previously, mining matters were dealt with by the Department of Lands and Surveys but with the advent of the 1890s goldrushes and the opening of the Collie coal mines a separate department was deemed necessary to deal with the associated rush of administrative business.\textsuperscript{21} Despite his unimpressive record, Prinsep was appointed to the influential position of Under Secretary of the Department with direct responsibility to Premier Forrest. While Prinsep did have some previous experience in the administration of mining, and personal correspondence indicates that Forrest had faith in his administrative abilities,\textsuperscript{22} it is probable that Forrest secured Prinsep this position in order to retain close control over the activities of the new department. Mining was a lucrative but politically sensitive area for the government and Prinsep, a trusted and dependant ally, could be counted on to carry out Forrest’s directives.

During his early years as Chief Protector of Aborigines, Prinsep was dominated by Forrest, although he showed an unexpected independence in his views on the appropriate role of the Aborigines Department. Alarmed by reports of increasing prostitution, drunkenness, venereal disease and death amongst Aborigines in the goldfields and coastal areas of the north, he urged Forrest to introduce legislation to enable the Department to intervene directly to improve the situation of Aborigines and to halt the decline in their numbers.
Prinsep believed that this could be achieved by legally restricting the Aborigines' contacts with the 'demoralising' influences of white settlement and, where necessary, by removing them from the wider community altogether. He also urged that Aborigines be compelled by law to earn a living by "proper and lawful means" rather than living off the proceeds of "prostitution and begging". Prinsep was also concerned at the number of part-Aboriginal children growing up in Aboriginal camps where, in his opinion, they learned only "laziness and vice" and warned that left to their own devices they would grow up to be "vagrants and outcasts" and "not only a disgrace but a menace to our society". He believed that despite the associated "great expense" it was the government's duty to remove these "half-British" children from the camps and to place them in missions where they could be educated and trained to become

...useful workers with merely such an amount of reading, writing, and numbers as would be of service to them in their position of humble labourers, the position which they cannot hope to rise from for at least three generations.

He also warned that unless young adults emerging from the missions were kept under strict supervision there was a danger that they would return to the camps and "revert to a more evil, because educated, barbarism than before".

Prinsep's concern with the incidence of venereal disease, prostitution and the consumption of alcohol amongst Aborigines was shared by other members of the Western Australian community. However, his concern to stamp them out reflected influences imbibed during his youth in British India and Victorian England as well as changing trends in Aboriginal policy and administration at the turn of the
century. His Victorian morality, together with a sense of 'charity' and 'responsibility' to the underprivileged and a nodding acquaintance with colonial policy and practice in British India, compelled him to action rather than a passive acceptance of the supposed inevitable extinction of the Aboriginal race. In 1900 he wrote to Forrest of his concern that he (rather than the forces of evolution) would be 'blamed' by future generations for the decline in the Aboriginal population if he failed to take some immediate action.  

His Victorian values were also evident in his concern for children and his belief that the "true work" of the missions lay in the "vice-ridden cities", an unusual idea given the demographic features of Western Australia but one in keeping with the concerns of Victorian England.

Prinsep's attitude also reflected the new interventionist spirit in Aboriginal affairs at the end of the nineteenth century. This was epitomised in the Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act passed in Queensland in 1897. This legislation grew out of a disturbing report presented to the Queensland Parliament in 1896, drawing attention to the disastrous effects of the pastoral and pearling industries on Aboriginal populations in north Queensland and the devastation caused by malnutrition, disease and the abuse of alcohol and opium. The Act incorporated the policies of protection and rigid segregation of Aborigines: for their protection and to check the decline in their condition and numbers they were to be forcibly removed from the wider community and kept indefinitely in segregated reserves. This was to provide the model for legislation passed in Western Australia (1905), South Australia (1910) and the Northern Territory (1911). However, it was legislation passed during the mid-nineteenth century in Victoria which most influenced Prinsep in the framing of a Bill to extensively amend the 1886 Aborigines
Protection Act and the 1897 Aborigines Act. The Victorian legislation originally allowed for the creation of reserve areas large enough for the development of agricultural and pastoral activities where Aborigines could live free from further exploitation and depopulation and where they could be encouraged to develop an interest in "civilised life and industry".* Prinsep presented the Bill to Forrest in 1900; however, as will be discussed, Forrest condemned the Bill and this brought the two men into direct conflict.

After Forrest's departure to Federal politics in 1901, there was a period of political instability in the Western Australian Parliament and a series of ministries passed in quick succession between 1901 and 1904. During this time the Department was usually assigned to the Colonial Secretary and the rapid turn-over in ministries, combined with the ministers' general lack of interest in the Department, meant that Prinsep was left to his own devices. However, Prinsep lacked the imagination and determination to take advantage of the situation. He failed to persuade his ministers to place his Bill before Parliament and it was the controversy surrounding allegations of cruelty to and abuse of Aboriginal workers in the pastoral industry which finally precipitated the introduction of legislation to amend the 1886 Aborigines Protection Act and the 1897 Aborigines Act. This amending legislation incorporated the aims of Prinsep's original Bill.

*The Aborigines Act was passed in Victoria in 1869 and led to the establishment of a number of large Aboriginal settlements. Following a change of policy in 1886 part-Aborigines were ordered off these stations and sent out into the wider community to earn their living. This was motivated by the government's efforts to cut back on expenditure on the stations and, more importantly, by its wish to resume reserve land for redistribution to white settlers. From this time to the early 1920s the stations were gradually closed down and the remaining Aborigines moved to Lake Tyers station in Gippsland (Barwick, 1963).
Frustrated in his attempts to deal with the broader issues Prinsep turned to the question of economy and a welter of minor relief items. He also devoted himself increasingly to the situation of Aborigines in the south. The nature of the problems he saw there, the care and education of part-Aboriginal children and the welfare of the elderly 'dying remnant', appealed to his Victorian sense of responsibility and provided him with the opportunity to attempt to put into effect the ideas incorporated in his Bill. To this end he encouraged the development of a small settlement for Aborigines at Cannington, on the outskirts of Perth, and encouraged the work of Aboriginal children's missions in the south. However, his initiatives were blocked by his ineptitude as an administrator and his powerlessness as Chief Protector of Aborigines. This position had no legal status under the 1897 Aborigines Act and there was little that the Chief Protector could do without the support of his Minister. Prinsep was also hampered in the administration of the Department by inadequate staff and the rudimentary field system. He received little assistance from his colleagues in other government departments, whilst missionaries and settlers already working with or employing Aborigines showed little interest in his plans and on occasion deliberately obstructed his work.

Prinsep was the target of public criticism from the turn of the century. During debate on the Estimates in Parliament in 1902 he was referred to as a "round man in a square hole" and the government was criticised for having a "Chief Protector sitting in a comfortable chair in Perth" (a reference to Prinsep's failure to travel any further north than Geraldton on tours of inspection). The well-used adage that the government should rely on the knowledge and experience of the pastoralists and police instead was repeated
by several members of Parliament. Outside of Parliament the amateur anthropologist, Daisy Bates, referred to Prinsep scathingly as the "dearest old lady in the world". 32

**Economisation of Services to Aborigines**

The reduction in the annual grant to Aborigines necessitated the introduction of strict economy measures which led in turn to a deterioration in the quality and range of services provided. Assistance to Aborigines under the Aborigines Department meant rations, blankets, clothing and medical care, along with subsidies for children cared for in Aboriginal missions. Other items provided for by the Board, such as the costs of legal representation for Aborigines convicted of serious crimes, were cut out altogether. Economy rather than adequate standards of welfare became the goal of the Aborigines Department between 1898 and 1905 and was also the preoccupation of subsequent administrators.

Forrest concentrated on reducing expenditure on rations (which took up 75 per cent of the Department's annual grant) and subsidies to missions. He was convinced that expenditure on rations by the Board had made Aborigines "lazy" and contributed to their "pauperisation" in the settled areas of the state. 33 He conveniently overlooked the effects of changes in the economy and the fact that the majority of Aborigines receiving rations were physically incapable of work. He strongly disapproved of 'laggarda' and was determined to see that Aborigines supported themselves as far as possible rather than becoming a 'burden' on the state. He also felt that settlers should contribute more to the maintenance of Aborigines on their properties. In 1898 he announced that the value of the ration scale (assessed at one shilling per person per diem under the Board) was
to be halved. This meant five kilos of flour, 750 grams of sugar, 250 grams of tea and up to two kilos of meat a week. The Aborigines were to supplement this meagre ration with 'bush tucker' and settlers were to assist in providing for them out of their own pockets. Forrest also made changes to the system of ration issue intended to prevent its continued abuse by settlers for their own gain and to ensure that Aborigines capable of working did so. In 1898 Forrest dispensed with the services of the Travelling Inspectors (who assisted in supervising the issue of rations under the Board) and instructed all Resident Magistrates, Resident Medical Officers and police officers that they were to take over this supervisory role. Wherever possible they, rather than settlers, were to issue rations to Aborigines. They were asked to forward monthly reports to the Department, giving particulars of all persons receiving rations in their district, and were to ensure that no person was placed on the permanent ration list without a medical certificate. In districts where they were unable to issue rations they were to certify all claims made by settlers before forwarding them to the Department and the police were requested to check on the validity of certain claims.

These innovations provoked an angry response from the settlers. Mrs Hammersley of Williams asked if an error had been made in the ration scale as she knew that Forrest was always "just to the Aborigines". Objections to the new scale were also raised in Parliament and the press. Settlers who continued to issue rations objected to being checked by government officers and even by the police and many stated that the new system was inconvenient and time-consuming. Mr Parker of York suggested that if the Department was not satisfied with the old system it should appoint a new inspector
to inquire into the condition of Aborigines generally and to devise a more suitable way of meeting their needs. For his part he did not intend having his time taken up with "Aboriginal business". 39 Some settlers reported that the new arrangements were inconvenient for Aborigines as well. Thomas Muir of Deeside, near Manjimup, informed the Department that Aborigines attached to his station went travelling between July and September, taking a three months' supply of rations with them. Under the system of monthly accounts he could only provide them with one month's rations when they set off and he was concerned that they would starve in the bush. 40

Forrest's innovations had little real impact. In most districts settlers continued to issue rations with little supervision from local government officers. The inspections by government officers and police had little real impact and in 1898 a Travelling Inspector, G.S. Olivey, was again appointed to the Department. Between 1900 and 1902 he visited stations throughout the state checking on the issue of rations.* He found considerable abuse of the system by settlers for their own gain: some purchased rations wholesale and then charged the Department full retail prices, while others paid their Aboriginal employees with rations funded by the Department. 41 The Dempsters, owners of Esperance and Fraser Downs Stations in the southeast of the state, used part of their annual grant of six tons of flour to pay their Aboriginal employees and they stated that

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* Olivey was the first and only Travelling Inspector to visit the far south of the state. During 1902 he travelled by horse and bicycle from Esperance to Jerramungup and on to Katanning and Williams. His tour of inspection in the south was cut short to enable him to take leave to attend the Coronation of Edward VII in England (A/4/1902).
it was "only fair" that their family company should have some of the money expended by the government on Aborigines. They "could not keep a lot of natives about the place who did little or no work". When their allowance was cut off by Prinsep they ordered all unemployed Aborigines off their land and the Esperance police reported that the people had moved to Kalgoorlie and Israelite Bay while a few remained in the district earning a living from kangaroo hunting. Due to Olivey's assiduousness the number of Aborigines on the permanent ration list fell by one third between 1902 and 1903 and this highlighted the importance of having officers in the field directly responsible to the Department to carry out its duties. However, as has been mentioned, Olivey was dismissed in 1903 on the recommendation of the Royal Commission into the Public Service, and within a year figures had returned to their previous levels. From this time Prinsep relied on the assistance of government officers in carrying out his duties at the local level. A consequence of this was that the Department became increasingly dependent on the services of the police.

Although Forrest's initiatives may have been directed against both settlers and Aborigines* it was the Aborigines who suffered

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*Biskup (1973) takes Marchant (1954) to task for his criticisms of Forrest's decisions in relation to the ration system. Marchant states that Forrest's view that welfare excluded hand-outs to Aborigines capable of supporting themselves forced Aborigines into employment or back into the bush: "out of harm's, and coot's way". Biskup, on the other hand, supports Forrest's views on welfare and points out that Forrest was attempting to prevent both Aborigines and settlers from abusing the system. Both writers start from the basic assumption that a significant proportion of Aborigines on rations under the Board were "able-bodied" as alleged by Forrest, although, like Forrest, they fail to provide any data to support this view. In fact the Board maintained staunchly that Aborigines on its ration lists were physically incapable of working and that the "able-bodied" were only rationed in extreme circumstances. The reports of the Travelling Inspector between 1900 and 1902 suggest that where abuse of the system was occurring it was due to the actions of the white settlers rather than the Aborigines.
most under the new system. The ration scale was totally inadequate for their nutritional needs as many were physically incapable of getting traditional foods to supplement their diet and in closely populated areas game and native plants were not readily available. In addition, few settlers were willing to provide for Aborigines at their own expense. The ration scale introduced by Forrest remained in force (with the modification of the removal of the meat issue) until the late 1920s and it contributed directly to high levels of malnutrition and associated disease amongst Aborigines in the state.

After Forrest's departure to Federal politics, Prinsep introduced a number of minor measures intended to keep Departmental expenditure on relief at a minimum. These included a new design for government-issue blankets to prevent their misappropriation by white settlers and Aborigines, a special marriage contract for Aboriginal couples legally binding the husband to provide for his wife and children in case of desertion, and payment for burials of Aborigines under contract rates.

* Few such contracts appear to have been taken out. Marchant (1981) provides an example of a contract between Beneine (or Beguine) and Alice dated 1903. The contract stated that William Beneine was to provide 10 shillings a week to Alice in the event of separation (A/244/1903). It is not known whether any contracts were ever enforced. The difficulties of locating the deserting husband and forcing him to fulfil the agreement would have been enormous and the small sum of money involved would have hardly warranted legal action.

** The 1897 Cemeteries Act made it compulsory for deceased persons in settled areas to be buried in designated cemeteries. This conflicted with the wishes of many Aboriginal people in the south and also placed a heavy financial burden on relatives of the deceased. In 1901 Tommy Croser died in Bridgetown Hospital and the hospital authorities arranged for his body to be buried in the local cemetery and for the expense to be borne by the government. Croser's family objected however, stating that they wished to bury the body according to Aboriginal traditions. Following the successful intervention of the local Resident Magistrate they were allowed to do so and the coffin was resumed by the hospital and the grave filled in (A/994/1901). Repeated requests for assistance in the payment of
Aboriginal Funeral, probably in the Narrogin district, n.d.
In 1898 Forrest reduced the overall mission grant from £3,000 to £1,220 and in the following year warned mission authorities not to expect liberal subsidies in future.\(^4\) The differential manner in which these cuts were implemented angered the Roman Catholic authorities. In the south, the subsidy to the Anglican Swan Native and Half Caste Home (S.N.H.C. Home) remained unchanged while New Norcia's annual grant was cut by half on the grounds that, with its large tracts of land and sizeable Aboriginal labour force, it should be self-supporting. Bishop Gibney told Prinsep in 1899:

> It was bad under the Aborigines Board, very bad, but under you it is worse... There is nothing so invidious as to slight one institution and liberally help another where both work for the same object.\(^4\)

Forrest was correct in his assessment of New Norcia's financial position. The S.N.H.C. Home provided a higher level of tuition for its charges, and therefore deserved special encouragement. However, it is probable that his hard-line attitude to the Roman Catholic missions contributed to the decision of the New Norcia authorities to curtail their work with Aborigines and to concentrate on developing educational facilities for white children. This was to have long-term adverse effects for Aborigines attached to New Norcia. When the matter of state aid was reviewed in 1900 the only change introduced was to restore the Catholic missions to their original subsidy levels.\(^4\)

**(contd.)**

Funeral expenses led the Department in 1905 to call tenders from local undertakers. Those granted contracts were instructed to use as little funeral paraphernalia as possible and that no prayers were to be read unless the deceased was a recognised Christian. Where the services of an undertaker were not available, the police were usually requested to see to the burial (A/128A/1905).
The Department of Public Health cooperated with the Aborigines Department in providing medical care for destitute Aborigines. Government hospitals and medical officers were bound by law to provide free medical attention to all paupers (including destitute Aborigines) and government subsidised hospitals were required to offer medical relief as requested. The Aborigines Department paid for costs associated with maternity cases, epidemics, injuries and long-standing ailments.46 It did little apart from this, although in some towns it provided separate hospital accommodation for Aboriginal patients. Following an outbreak of typhoid amongst Aborigines in Katanning in 1898 the Department erected a small hut on reserve land for the isolation of the patients. This was maintained as a hospital 'ward' for Aborigines until 1906 when it was closed down following objections to the presence of Aborigines in the town by the Katanning Roads Board.47 In Perth, Aborigines were treated at the Perth Public Hospital and in return were asked to collect leeches for use at the Hospital, for which they were paid four pence a dozen.48

The Department did little to ensure that Aborigines received adequate standards of treatment and it appears that doctors, particularly in country towns, were frequently remiss in their handling of Aboriginal patients. However, the circumstances surrounding the death of William Noongale Kickett at Beverley in 1904 did lead to a Departmental inquiry. This was due in part to the ironic and tragic events surrounding his death, and more importantly, to Kickett's long-term association with John Forrest. (Such patronage relationships were not rare at the turn of the century. Prinsep, for example, provided special assistance to Aborigines of his acquaintance from the Busselton district.) In addition, John Kickett, William Kickett's nephew, was literate and therefore able to write
to Forrest presenting his family's views on the chain of events leading to Kickett's death. Three days prior to his own death Kickett informed the Department that the failure of the local medical officer, Dr Butler, to adequately care for a sick woman from the Aboriginal camp had led to her death, and also alleged that her husband had died under similar circumstances in the previous year. A letter to Prinsep from a Beverley resident, W.G. Iles, following Kickett's death, repeated these allegations and also attributed Kickett's death to Butler's negligence. On hearing of Kickett's death and the events surrounding it, Forrest wrote to his family requesting further information. Kickett's brothers, James and Thomas Kickett and his nephew John Kickett told Forrest that Butler had refused to visit Kickett in his camp but had sent a bottle of medicine instead. Kickett died after taking three doses of the medicine and, on seeing the body, the doctor was said to have remarked that Kickett appeared to have been poisoned. Forrest requested Prinsep to make a formal inquiry into Kickett's death and, on the basis of Butler's replies to his questions, Prinsep concluded that he had not shown "that interest in either Kickett's or Sarah Andrew's cases which I might have a right to expect from him. It is a most upsetting and distressing affair". However, no action was taken against Butler and he appears to have continued as the medical officer in Beverley.

Prinsep's Bill

Early in 1900, following sustained pressure for action from Prinsep and growing criticism of the treatment of Aborigines in the pastoral industry by Forrest's political opponents, Forrest instructed the parliamentary draftsman to frame new legislation in consultation with Prinsep. The resulting Bill, entitled "An Act for the Further
Protection of the Aboriginal Race of Western Australia", was placed before Forrest at the beginning of the final Parliamentary session in 1900.50

As we have discussed, the Bill drew heavily on legislation passed in Victoria during the nineteenth century. It was to provide for the protection of Aborigines by isolating them from the wider community on reserves, limiting their entry to towns, and controlling their contacts with the wider community, particularly in relation to miscegenation and alcohol. The Bill allowed for the gazetting of areas populated largely by whites (townsites, municipalities) as prohibited areas which Aborigines were to be prevented from entering by law, and reserves to which they could be removed for indefinite periods. The entry of unauthorised non-Aboriginal persons to these reserves was to be strictly prohibited by law. It was also to be an offence for such persons to camp with Aborigines or for other than Aboriginal men to cohabit with Aboriginal women. Special provisions were included to strictly prohibit sexual relations between Aboriginal women and pearling crews. Significantly, the Bill extended the application of the legal definition of "Aboriginal native" contained in the 1886 Aborigines Protection Act to all state legislation. This was intended to further limit Aborigines' access to alcohol by extending the prohibition on the supply of alcohol (contained in the 1880 Wines, Beer and Spirits Act) to "half-castes" who lived with Aborigines who, according to the police, were their major suppliers. The employment of Aborigines was to be placed directly under the control of the Aborigines Department: all employers were to have the written approval of the Minister in Charge of the Department, the Chief Protector, or a Resident Magistrate to employ Aborigines and the Chief Protector, or any person acting under his
authority, was to supervise Aborigines in employment. This was intended to protect Aborigines from abuse by their employers and also to enable the Department to ensure that Aborigines were not "enticed" away from lawful employment to a life of "prostitution and begging in the camps". To facilitate the removal of part-Aboriginal children from the camps to missions the Chief Protector was to become their legal guardian with the power to remove them from "any place" and to cause them to remain in "any other place". To ensure compliance with its provisions the Bill allowed for heavy fines and harsh prison sentences for offences against the Act, which were to be dealt with by any court of summary jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{51}

Forrest reacted strongly against these repressive provisions. Of the reserves he wrote "this would make Prisoners of the poor people in their own country. For their own good it would be said". Prohibited areas were a "monstrous infringement on the liberty of the native. It is manufacturing offences, with a vengeance". The prohibition on unauthorised entry to reserves was "too absurd" and in his opinion could not possibly be enforced. While Forrest raised no objections to legal guardianship over the children, he added that it should only be used "for some good cause". He instructed Prinsep to act slowly in this "difficult matter" and, showing his ignorance of changing trends in policy and practice at the time, advised Prinsep to consult legislation in the other states, adding that in future such matters should be presented to him at the beginning of the Parliamentary session.\textsuperscript{52}

Prinsep was infuriated by Forrest's scathing comments and retorted in a minute to Forrest that nothing could be done to alleviate the plight of the Aborigines.
...without this interference in their liberty the objection to which is I think rather a stone wall to any effort to promote the future welfare and raising of the native race. 53

He self-righteously pointed out that he had already consulted legislation from other states and noted that the Bill had been on Forrest's desk from the very beginning of the Parliamentary session. However, Forrest took no further action, and relations between the two men remained strained. In 1901 Forrest left to take up a seat as the member for Bunbury in the new Federal Parliament.

Biskup (1973) attributes Forrest's opposition to the Bill solely to his personal antipathy to further restrictions on the liberty of Aborigines. However, Forrest's response also certainly reflected the exigencies of the political scene in 1900. From the mid 1890s Forrest's monopoly of power in the state had been slowly eroded by newcomers attracted by the goldrushes. They brought with them new and more enlightened political views and they found the compound of "social snobbery, laissez-faire capitalism, sentimental royalism, patriotic Anglicanism [and] benevolent imperialism"54 which the Forrest government represented, both out-dated and repugnant. During the 1890s, together with a number of liberal-minded "ancient colonists",* they began to agitate for political reforms and an end to the monopolisation of power by Forrest and the Establishment of the landed gentry and the pastoralists. The success of the movement was evident in the results of the 1897 election which marked the

* The terms "ancient colonists" and "recent arrivals" are borrowed from Stennage (1966). The former refers to the West Australian-born settlers and the latter to those people who arrived in the state from the mid 1880s in response to the goldrushes in the north and in the goldfields.
political impact of the "recent arrivals". The power of the Forrest
government was seriously weakened and from this time the "recent
arrivals" represented a serious threat to the conservative forces
in government.  

The newcomers were totally opposed to the system of employment
of Aborigines in the pastoral industry in the north where Aborigines
worked for meagre rations and their rights were subjugated by the
repressive discriminatory laws passed during the early 1890s by the
Forrest government and the actions of the police and local courts
in punishing Aborigines who disobeyed their employers. Particular
concern was expressed at the physical punishments meted out to
Aborigines by employers and the indenturing of children as young
as six years of age to employers who were under no obligation to
provide even minimum standards of training and accommodation.
Meanwhile, the children faced the prospect of imprisonment if they
attempted to leave their employers or failed to carry out their orders.
The 'new-comers' were also opposed to the employment of Aborigines
in the place of white workers and through their attacks on the 'forced
slavery' of Aborigines in the pastoral industry during the late 1890s
they sought to break this system and thereby create employment for
their own supporters. At the same time this reflected the growing
obsession with race in Australia at the turn of the century and the
belief that the country's coming national greatness lay in "being
white and also part of the British race". The new-comers' attacks
also formed part of their more general campaign to discredit the
Forrest government.

These criticisms prompted Frederick Illingworth (Central
Murchison) to propose in the Legislative Assembly in 1899 that an
enquiry be appointed to look into conditions of Aborigines in the
north and the indenture system in particular. In the same session the fiery member for North-East Coolgardie, F.C.B. Vosper, demanded details on sentences imposed on Aborigines for deserting service. Forrest quashed Illingworth's proposal stating that the northwest had been settled for many years and the Aborigines were 'domesticated' and living and working comfortably on the stations and the matter was shelved, temporarily at least.\textsuperscript{57} Forrest was hardly likely to forge ahead with the introduction of further repressive legislation in this political climate thereby providing his political opponents with additional ammunition against his government. At the same time the Bill would have found little favour amongst the pastoral lobby as its employment provisions represented a major intrusion into a system which they had developed to their own advantage.

Despite Forrest's rejection of the Bill, Prinsep had a minor triumph in 1902 when, following continued complaints from the police about part-Aborigines drinking in hotels and supplying alcohol to Aborigines, the 1880 Wines, Beer and Spirits Act\textsuperscript{*} was amended to extend the prohibition on supply of alcohol to "half-castes" who lived with Aborigines.\textsuperscript{58} This led immediately to several complaints from part-Aborigines in the south. William Hart, a farmer from the Williams district, wrote to Prinsep in 1902 enquiring about his status under the Act and told Prinsep that he had

\textsuperscript{*} Legislation prohibiting the supply of alcohol to Aborigines was first introduced in Western Australia in 1843 (7 Vict. No. 3). The maximum penalty was a fine of £5.
...always been under the impression that we [were] not prevented from going to a hotel to get a glass of beer. Now Sir, I have a wife and family here on my own land and I think it is very hard if such is the case [we] have to go to town to do our business at times and I think it very hard if I am debarred from going to a hotel to get refreshments for our families. We work hard and honest for our living and I don't see why we should be classed with the blacks that roam the bush. Now Sir, if such is the case you must write and let me know as I will know how to act in the future?"

However, it was not until 1904, after continued criticism of the treatment of Aborigines in the pastoral industry and the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into the conditions of Aborigines in the state that a Bill incorporating the basic aims of Prinsep's Bill was placed before Parliament. An amended version of this Bill was placed before Parliament in 1905 and this became the 1905 Aborigines Act. Through his role in drafting the original Bill and his contribution to subsequent Bills, Prinsep made a major and largely unrecognised contribution to the repressive legislation which dominated Aboriginal affairs in the state for the next thirty years. This was particularly in relation to the status of part-Aborigines and the introduction of Departmental controls over their children. The public debate which led to the proclamation of the 1905 Aborigines Act was largely concerned with the conditions of Aborigines in the north. However, Prinsep continued to push for the introduction of controls over part-Aborigines throughout the state and over part- Aboriginal children in particular.
Settlements and Missions: Prinsep on his Own

Following Forrest's departure, Prinsep attempted to put some of his ideas into action through the establishment of a settlement for Aborigines at Cannington (known as Welshpool Reserve) and through his involvement in mission work with part-Aboriginal children. His lack of success in both endeavours highlighted the inadequacies of the existing legislation, while the Aborigines' response to his efforts showed that they had their own definite ideas about how they wanted to live and the degree of bureaucratic interference they were prepared to tolerate in their lives.

Welshpool Reserve

Welshpool Reserve was the first Aboriginal settlement established by the Aborigines Department in Western Australia and it provides an interesting foretaste of future government settlements, particularly in the south of the state. It graphically illustrates the disastrous outcome when, for reasons of economy and administrative expediency, an institution is changed from a single to a multi-purpose institution with insufficient resources and funding to fulfil its various new functions.

In 1899 Forrest approved the gazetting of a 500-acre reserve for the use of Aborigines at Cannington, an outer suburb of Perth, and in the same year Prinsep announced his intention to establish a 'home' for Aborigines there, modelled on the self-supporting agricultural settlements established in Victoria during the nineteenth century and New Norcia (albeit on a much smaller scale and with

* Daisy Bates also refers to Welshpool Reserve as Maamba Reserve.
considerably less financial outlay). It was to provide a central living area for needy Aborigines in the Perth metropolitan area where those Aborigines physically incapable of working could camp and receive rations while their families contributed to the self-supporting aims of the settlement through the cultivation of flowers, fruit and vegetables for the local market and through cottage industries such as boot-making, basket and net weaving, brick making and cutting wood for sale to settlers in the district. For this purpose families were to be allocated small plots of land to clear and cultivate and provided with small jarrah frame iron huts.

The first Aborigines to move to Welshpool Reserve were Charles Timbul (Timble) and Ngilgie, both originally from the Vasse district south of Busselton. Ngilgie was born near Augusta in the 1840s and was said to have been raised at the home of Alf Bussell where she did housework and learned to read and write, and she later did domestic work for the Forrest and Fairbairn families. During the 1890s she camped in the Highgate Hill area in Perth and regularly visited the Bussell women who had settled in Perth, presumably including Prinsep's wife. Despite her broad contacts with white settlers, Ngilgie had close ties with her Aboriginal traditions and she later became one of Daisy Bates most valued informants. Timbul had worked on various farms in the south and in 1894 was granted a reserve farming block in the Coolup district and in 1898 he agreed to exchange this for land at the Welshpool Reserve. When they arrived at Welshpool, Timbul and Ngilgie had four horses, a dozen hens, several goats and over twenty dogs. By 1903 there were sixteen Aborigines and part-Aborigines living in family groups at the Reserve along with a small transient population of their relatives who moved between the Reserve and other camps in the metropolitan area. Some
Above: Ngilgie and Timbul on their block at Welshpool Reserve, c. 1903

Right: Timbul
progress had been made in the development of the settlement: the residents had sunk two wells, cleared and fenced four blocks for cultivation, and four small huts had been erected. During the year Prinsep received several enquiries from Aborigines interested in taking up blocks there. Charles F. Williams wrote from New Norcia requesting a block. He told Prinsep that he had worked at the mission for eight years, labouring, butchering sheep and team driving, and he was unable to support his family on his low wage of £1 a week.\textsuperscript{63} His wife’s sister, Louise Gentle, and their mother, Polly Kajjaman Gentle, were already living at Welshpool where Louise’s husband, James Nindemarra Cooper had a small block of land. Born during the 1860s, Cooper had been sent to New Norcia at the age of six. In 1887 he left the mission and applied for a block of land near Wongan Hills. In 1889 he became the first Aboriginal in Western Australia to be granted a reserve farming block.* However, the block proved unsuitable for farming and after Cooper was stricken with Brights Disease in the late 1890s he moved with his family to Welshpool where he became the spokesman for the Reserve residents.\textsuperscript{64} It is not known whether William’s application for a block was successful but it serves to indicate that Welshpool Reserve had the potential to develop into a small community of inter-related families with the skills to successfully farm the land.

In the midst of this success Prinsep made an unfortunate change of plans for the settlement. In 1903 he announced that Welshpool was to become a central ration depot for all Aborigines in the Perth, Guildford and Fremantle districts and a camping ground for elderly Aborigines. A white superintendent, Thomas Kelly, was to be appointed

\textsuperscript{*} For details on reserve farms for Aborigines see Chapter Four and Appendix II.
Aboriginal Men living at Welshpool Reserve, c. 1904
to collect and supervise the issue of rations, assist in the erection of huts, keep the residents supplied with firewood, transport invalids to the hospital, transport produce to the local markets and provide "rudimentary instruction" to children at the Reserve. 65

These changes were motivated by several factors. Economic changes in the south from the turn of the century, to be discussed in Chapter Four, had contributed to an increase in the number of elderly Aborigines seeking assistance from the Aborigines Department and they represented an unwelcome growing financial burden on the state. Those requiring constant attention and nursing were of particular concern to Prinsep. The Department had no facilities where they could be cared for and on occasion bizarre arrangements were made for their accommodation. In 1901 an elderly blind man was housed in the Bunbury Jail where he was supervised by the police, and when they tired of this arrangement they recommended that he be moved to Rottnest Island Prison to be cared for there. Prinsep rejected this proposal and attempted without success to persuade local Aborigines to care for him. One woman refused to have anything to do with him as he had killed her brother over a tribal matter and, reluctantly, Prinsep arranged to pay a local white woman to nurse him. 66 Prinsep considered the costs of caring for a large number of elderly Aborigines in this way prohibitive and he saw their central accommodation at Welshpool as an economical alternative. Prinsep was also concerned by complaints from white residents about Aborigines camping on private blocks of land, government reserves, vacant allotments and even unused streets in the Perth metropolitan district. Many of the complaints came from the Guildford district which was a traditional gathering place for Aborigines, and in 1901
a letter appeared in the *West Australian* complaining about Aborigines camping in the area. A long-time Guildford resident, T. Savage, replied to the letter stating that Aborigines had camped on a private block of land in the area for the last eighteen years and had caused no trouble. He suggested that the complaints had come from new settlers who had no understanding of Aborigines. In the following year Prinsep received a letter of complaint from the Guildford Road Board objecting to the numerous Aboriginal camps in the area. Prinsep was himself personally annoyed at the movement of Aborigines around the camps in the metropolitan area and, in particular, their movement on and off Welshpool Reserve and he complained on several occasions of his inability to force them to remain there as permanent residents. The centralisation of the issue of rations at Welshpool was a way of forcing Aborigines to move to the Reserve and to settle there permanently. In addition, centralisation of the Aborigines at one camp meant that the Department and the police would be able to supervise their activities more closely. This was the first of many attempts by the Department to manipulate the ration system to control the distribution and movement of Aborigines in the south and to increase external control over their behaviour.

The Aborigines living at the Reserve objected strongly to Prinsep's announcement. James Cooper told him they did not want the settlement to deteriorate into a ration depot and they were opposed to the appointment of a white superintendent. Ngilgi and Timbul feared that he would shoot their dogs and it was generally believed that he would interfere in their activities and restrict their rights. However Prinsep went ahead with his plans and during 1903 a number of elderly Aborigines from Perth, Guildford, Helena Valley, Gin Gin, Northam, York, Beverley, Busselton and Pinjarra
Elderly Residents of Welshpool Reserve, c. 1905
were moved to Welshpool. Other Aborigines camped in the metropolitan area appear to have refused to move there and Prinsep had no legal power to force them to do so. Meanwhile, Prinsep's actions and the deaths of Charles Timbul in 1904 and of James Cooper in the following year served to disperse the original Reserve residents. Following the death of her husband, Louise Gentle had to battle with Prinsep and Guildford Hospital to gain possession of her husband's body in order to provide him with a private family funeral and, angered by this treatment, she moved off to a camp near Guildford with her mother and children. At the same time Prinsep offended several other residents by expelling a family for taking alcohol onto the Reserve and they also moved off in protest.

In 1905 the amateur anthropologist, Mrs Daisy Bates, set up camp at Welshpool Reserve in order to pursue her research into the traditions and customs of the 'natives' of Western Australia.* Bates found only a "few and homeless derelicts" still living in the camp and, apart from the high proportion of elderly people, the Reserve was virtually indistinguishable from any other camp in the metropolitan area. Cultivation had ceased and residents were dependent on government rations which they supplemented with bush foods such as wild edible roots. With the exception of Ngilgie (who had stayed on at Welshpool after Timbul's death) the residents preferred to live in mia mias, rather than the tin huts provided for their

* Despite her apparently close relationship with some of her Aboriginal informants at the camp, Bates maintained a curiously detached scientific attitude to her Aboriginal 'friends'. Fanny Balbuk was a particularly valued informant and friend but, following her death in 1907, Bates asked Chief Protector Prinsep for her skull, "for scientific purposes". Bates recorded that Prinsep was "horrified" and commented that if she could only "body snatch it", the skull would prove "invaluable" (Salter, 1971: 132).
Corroboree Dancers, Welshpool Reserve, 1905

The men were decorated with pipe clay and red ochre and their heads were covered with wood shavings and red blooms.
use, and traditional beliefs dominated their daily lives. Bates records that following the death of a young part-Aboriginal boy, the residents refused to use his personal name and a namesake of the dead boy was renamed Kwelaburt or "no name", while residents with reputed magical and clairvoyant powers were treated with great caution and respect. Corroborees were also held and when Governor and Lady Bedford visited the Reserve in 1905 the men performed an authentic corroboree for their entertainment. 71

Bates left Welshpool Reserve following the death of several of her major informants and in 1908 set off on a tour of Aboriginal camps in the southern districts. In the same year Welshpool Reserve was handed over to the Australian Inland Mission. As will be discussed later, the Mission was a failure. However Aboriginal families continued to use the Reserve as a temporary camping ground until it was officially cancelled in 1928.

The Children's Missions

Prinsep also had little success with the missions and his attempts to place more part-Aboriginal children under their care. There were three missions providing for the education and care of children of Aborigines in the south at the turn of the century: the New Norcia Benedictine Mission, the Swan Native and Half-Caste Home and Ellensbrook Farm Home, a small Anglican mission situated on the Margaret River south of Busselton, opened in 1898. In 1905 Prinsep also arranged for a small number of 'intelligent' Aboriginal children of part descent to be sent to the Salvation Army Industrial Homes and Orphanage at Collie. These institutions catered for white

* Biskup gives the date of establishment of Ellensbrook as 1878, however he appears to be confusing Ellensbrook with the Vasse Native and Half-Caste Home which was opened in that year. The Home was closed during the 1890s (Busselton Historical Society Records, 48). Prinsep stated in his 1898 Annual Report that the Ellensbrook Farm Home was opened in 1898.
children and Prinsep believed that mixing the children together would be effective in encouraging the Aboriginal children to enter the "lower levels of labour". Admission of female Aboriginal children to the Home was stopped in 1909 after the Superintendent of the Charities Department alleged that the girls were having a bad influence on the white children, despite protestations from the Salvation Army authorities that the opposite was in fact the case. From this time girls were sent to the Salvation Army Home at Kalgoorlie, while a small number of boys continued on at Collie.

The missions operated under the provisions of the 1874 Industrial Schools Act and Prinsep had no legal rights to inspect them without the approval of the mission authorities, nor could he demand information on how the Department's subsidies to the missions were expended or reports on the progress of the children while they were at the mission, or after they were indentured out to employers by the mission authorities. He also lacked any power to remove children to the missions. Most children were sent in by their parents or guardians (in the same way that white children were sent to boarding schools) or were orphans who voluntarily surrendered themselves to the care of the missions. Generally, only a small number of orphans or children convicted of minor offences were sent in under the orders of the Aborigines Department.

Nevertheless there were some children who came under the Department's control against the wishes of their parents. The anguish which this caused the parents is evident in the following plea from a father for the return of his son:
I do hope you will try to get him back as quick as you can for I am afraid that I will lose my poor wife....I am afraid that she will commit suicide if the boy is not back soon for she is good for nothing only cry day and night....I have as much love for my dear wife and children as you have for yours....so if you have any feeling at all please send the boy back as quick as you can it did not take long for him to go but it takes a long time for him to come back."

Such sentiments failed to deter Prinsep from his task and in 1902 he requested all Resident Magistrates in the state to inquire whether any parents of part-Aboriginal children in their districts could be "induced" to send their children to the missions. The replies were not encouraging: some parents in the south were sending their children to schools locally and none were willing to hand their children over to the control of the missions. Prinsep complained in his 1902 Annual Report that the "natural affections of the mothers...stood much in my way". Nevertheless he continued to press for legal guardianship over the children.

Mission authorities showed little interest in cooperating with Prinsep. By 1905 he had only visited the S.N.H.C. Home once while he had not visited New Norcia at all. His requests for reports on individual children at New Norcia had been greeted with a curt refusal. However, Prinsep did have considerable influence over the Ellensbrook Farm Home which was situated on land south of Busselton owned by the Bussell family and run by his wife's niece, Edith Bussell. Ellensbrook took in a limited number of children (the maximum number there at any time was ten) and also provided a temporary refuge for adults. The children were predominantly part-Aboriginal and came from various parts of the state, having been sent in by their parents or guardians, or as orphans by the
Department. The mission received a daily subsidy of between seven pence and one shilling per child, and additional assistance was provided as requested by Miss Bussell. The children received a rudimentary education and one boy later complained to the Department that they only had lessons on Sunday evenings after a week of farm work and domestic duties. When the boys were old enough they were sent out to work for local farmers while the girls worked as domestics and were encouraged to marry local young part-Aboriginal men.

Miss Bussell corresponded regularly with Prinsep about the children and he in turn took a particular interest in their welfare, exchanging letters with some of the children and occasionally calling at the Home on his visits to his wife's family. In June 1905 Prinsep was in Busselton to attend the marriage of Jennie Councillor, an Ellensbrook girl originally from the Northampton district, to Sam Isaacs the son of Samuel Isaacs of the Georgette fame, who had worked for the Bussell family for many years. Prinsep also acted as guardian and 'patron' for the young people at Ellensbrook. George Long, a former employee of Miss Bussell, wrote to Prinsep in 1904 requesting to marry one of the Ellensbrook girls. However, she planned to marry another, and in 1906 Long married Rosie Guy, also from Ellensbrook. When Long applied for a reserve farming block in the

* The Ellensbrook residents in 1902 included Mary Corbett and her sons Dan and Frank, originally from Roebourne; Jane Councillor from Northampton; Tommy Ah Hong of Williamsbury near Carnarvon, sent in by his father "for schooling"; Emil Penny, an orphaned child from the Albany district; Dora Regine Nest from Springs Station near Roebourne; Ivy Hadji of Carnarvon sent in "for schooling" (A/117/1902).

** In 1874 Samuel Isaacs played a major role in rescuing survivors from the ship, the Georgette, which was wrecked off the coast near Margaret River, south of Busselton.
Sussex district in the same year, Prinsep strongly supported his application and in the following year Long began farming his block.79

**The Anti-Pastoralist Campaign**

While Prinsep devoted himself to his labours in the south, continued criticism of the treatment and condition of Aborigines employed in the pastoral industry was creating a storm in state Parliament. These criticisms led directly to the appointment of the Roth Royal Commission in 1904 and to the proclamation of the 1905 Aborigines Act.

The vociferousness of the pastoralists' critics and their strong impact on Aboriginal affairs in the state reflected the changing balance of power in Parliament following Forrest's departure to Federal politics and the state's continuing sensitivity to its reputation with the British government. Three major groups vied for control of the Legislative Assembly* from the turn of the century: the Forrest party representing the interests of the conservative established settlers (including the pastoralists); the supporters of George Leake who were drawn mainly from the more conservative new-comers to the state and the more liberal-minded old settlers; and the Labor Party (established in Western Australia in 1901)

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* From 1890 to 1911 the Legislative Council remained virtually un-reformed. The franchise in the Council was limited to property owners and this excluded many new-comers to the state from voting for the Council. By contrast the Forrest government had made progressive innovations in the Legislative Assembly franchise during the 1890s and it was in this House that the struggle for power was battled out (Stannage, 1966).

** Leake was Premier for a brief period early in 1901 and then again from December 1901 until his death in July 1902. His place was taken by Walter James who was Premier from July 1902 to August 1904. C.H. Rason, Premier from August 1905 to May 1906, was also from this faction (Bolton, 1961).
representing the socially more progressive new-comers to the state and the trade unions. Between 1901 and 1904 control of the Assembly oscillated between the former two groups. However the power of the Forrest group was increasingly eroded and, from 1902 until it won government in August 1904, the Labor Party held the balance of power in the Assembly. The campaign to discredit the pastoralists (now led by the Labor Party with the support of a few members of the Leake faction) was stepped up during this period and, as during the late 1890s, criticism of their treatment of Aborigines formed part of this broader campaign. As levels of unemployment increased from the turn of the century following the decline of the goldrushes, members of the Labor Party became increasingly concerned that Aborigines rather than white workers were being employed on the stations and they saw their attacks on the pastoralists as a way of smashing the system and opening up new employment possibilities for their supporters. At the same time there were a few politicians who saw the attacks as a way of opening up debate on the whole matter of state policy on Aboriginal affairs.

The campaign was conducted at the state and national levels and in the British press as well. Articles appeared in the Eastern States press condemning the cruel treatment of Aborigines in Western Australia and referring to conditions of 'slavery' on the pastoral stations. The matter of Federal responsibility for Aboriginal affairs was raised in a number of papers, including the Melbourne Age, which came out strongly in support of Federal control. The allegations of cruelty and slavery were also reported in the British press, and an article in the London Times in June 1901 referred to the "ruthless oppression of the black population...in the sparsely inhabited bush" whose "taskmasters" could "use the knout practically unhindered".
It advised that the Federal government could best begin "its career" by instituting a "searching inquiry" into the matter and by "improving the lot of the dwindling native race".\textsuperscript{82} The campaign entered the arena of Federal politics in 1901 when the member for Coolgardie, Hugh Mahon, in a fiery speech in the House of Representatives, condemned the system of employment of Aborigines in the pastoral industry and the handling of cases involving Aborigines in the lower courts in the north of Western Australia. He moved that a Royal Commission be appointed to enquire into conditions of Aborigines north of the 30th parallel in the state and to examine the advisability of making Aboriginal affairs a Federal responsibility.\textsuperscript{83}

The Western Australian government responded with righteous indignation to these criticisms. In August 1901 Dr J.S. Hicks (Roebourne) moved formally in the Legislative Assembly for the appointment of a Select Committee to enquire into the allegations, claiming that his honour had been "challenged" by the "exaggerated rumours" spread by visitors to the north.\textsuperscript{84} A good deal of parochial sentiment was expressed in the ensuing debate. John Nanson (Murchison) asserted that the "few isolated" instances of cruelty in the north were perpetrated by men from "those other humane states" and not by those "born and bred" in the West.\textsuperscript{85} Premier Leake staunchly defended the state's laws which allowed pastoralists to inflict physical punishment on their Aboriginal employees, claiming that Aborigines were not equal "physically, mentally or by the standards of civilisation" to whites and therefore had to be "treated differently - with the lash. They realise their responsibility through their skins".\textsuperscript{86} The anti-pastoralist lobby, however, used the opportunity to further its attacks on its political opponents. George 'Mulga' Taylor (Labor, Goldfields), in seconding Hicks' motion,
condemned the "flogging" of Aborigines and demanded an inquiry into ways of improving conditions of Aborigines in the state generally, and he ridiculed the government's attempts to portray pastoralists as "philanthropists", claiming that there was "no danger" of their giving "more than they [were] compelled to give their workmen, whether black or white". 87 Henry Daglish (Subiaco), who was to become Australia's first Labor Premier in 1904, demanded an immediate end to the state's "bad laws" for Aborigines, claiming that as the whites had "practically stolen the land from the natives" it was their duty to see that the Aborigines were "treated with the utmost degree of consideration". 88 Despite the fiery debate and the success of a motion put forward by F. Connor (East Kimberley) to appoint a Royal Commission rather than a Select Committee, the matter was allowed to lapse. However, the criticisms and public discussion of the need to enquire into the condition of the state's Aboriginal population continued.

In December 1901 allegations of "brutal slavery still in full swing" and of cruelty to and abuse of Aborigines by pastoralists and police in the north of Western Australia were made in the London News by Walter Malcolmson, an Englishman who had lived for some time in the Marble Bar district. This prompted a discreet request from the British Secretary of State for an official comment from the West Australian government. A board of police officers was appointed to enquire into the allegations and, not surprisingly, their findings refuted Malcolmson's claims. 89

These outspoken criticisms did have some effect. In 1902 the Criminal Code repealed all discriminatory legislation pertaining to the trial of Aboriginal offenders, with the exception of the sentences of whipping and public hanging. Free legal representation
for Aborigines charged with serious crimes was re-introduced in the same year and the courts were instructed to forward records of all proceedings involving Aborigines as defendants, plaintiffs, or as accessories to the Aborigines Department. However, the government had little real commitment to these changes. This was evident in a subsequent amendment to the Criminal Code which allowed all proceedings before Justices (with the exception of capital crimes) in which Aboriginal defendants pleaded guilty to be heard summarily.\(^9\)

These changes failed to satisfy the government's critics and the publication of the Travelling Inspector's Report on conditions of Aborigines in the pastoral industry in the 1902 Annual Report of the Aborigines Department added fuel to the debate.\(^*\) In September 1902 J.W Butcher (Gascoyne) moved in the Legislative Assembly for the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into all aspects of Aboriginal administration. Henry Daglish, in supporting the motion, stated that such information was essential for the development of a constructive state policy on Aborigines. However the government was now opposed to the notion of an inquiry and W. Kingsmill (Pilbara) and Illingworth told the House that the allegations of cruelty had been quashed and that an inquiry would only be interpreted as an admission of guilt on the part of the government.\(^1\) The motion was lost but Daglish continued to push for a Royal Commission and the matter was raised again during debate on the Annual Estimates in November 1902. The Leader of the Opposition, John Nanson, advised that rather than an inquiry, the government should see to the

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\(^*\) Olivey's reports were also published separately in the same year. They contain much valuable information on Aborigines in the pastoral industry at the turn of the century.
introduction of Prinsep's Bill, and he made special reference to
the matter of the removal of part-Aboriginal children to missions
warning that, left in the camps, they would become a "serious menace"
to society.²² C. Moran (West Perth), expressing a popular stereotype
about part-Aborigines, added that while they "seemed" to have the
intelligence of whites they "unfortunately...retained a great many
of the saddest traits of the blacks".²³

The outspoken pro-Labor Perth newspaper, the Morning Herald,
also took up the campaign for the appointment of a Royal Commission
and in an editorial in October 1902 advised that it should be entrusted
to an "outsider", recommending Dr E.W. Roth, an Oxford-educated
surgeon and ethnologist of repute, who was also the Protector of
Aborigines in North Queensland, as a suitable commissioner.²⁴ In
Britain in January 1904 Walter Malcolmson argued strongly in a letter
to The Times for the appointment of an independent commissioner.
He described the pastoralists' earlier proposal to conduct an inquiry
themselves as "a farce, on par with a jury of burglars presided over
by a garroter trying a prisoner for robbery", and he asserted that
their opposition to the appointment of an independent inquiry merely
indicated the "depth of their guilt".²⁵

In April 1904 the government finally took action. Premier Walter
James approached Roth to head a Royal Commission into the condition
of Aborigines in the state and at the end of August Roth was formally
appointed Royal Commissioner by the new Labor Premier, Henry Daglish.
Earlier in the year, however, Prinsep had been instructed by the
James ministry to consult with the Crown Law Department in the drafting
of legislation to amend the 1886 Aborigines Protection Act and
the 1897 Aborigines Act, and the resulting Bill was placed before
the Legislative Council in September 1904 by the Daglish government before Roth's report had been received.

The 1904 Aborigines Protection Bill

When introducing the 1904 Bill in the Legislative Council the Minister for Lands, J.M. Drew, stated that it was not "novel legislation" and while some of the clauses might appear "stringent" he had been assured that they were necessary to "provide for the full measure of protection for the natives". This statement highlights the ambiguity of the Labor Party's position in relation to Aboriginal affairs. Commenting on the repressive nature of the Bill, Welborn (1978) points out that while the Labor Party championed the rights of Aborigines in opposition, once in government it followed the example of its predecessors and acted in its own interest to protect white workers from the "threat" of "cheap" Aboriginal labour. There was a further irony in that, while the so-called humanitarians in its ranks had expressed outrage at the repressive laws pertaining to Aborigines in employment and before the local courts, they were convinced that laws which were equally restrictive and repressive in nature were essential for the "better protection" of Aborigines "for their own good". This mode of thinking was not confined to members of the Labor Party but was a feature of general 'humanitarian' views on Aboriginal policy at the time.

The amending Bill drew on the 1897 Queensland legislation and also incorporated all the basic intentions of Prinsep's original Bill. The Department's annual grant was to be doubled and the office of Chief Protector accorded legal status with broad powers over Aborigines throughout the state. In particular, he was to have legal guardianship over children of Aborigines with the power to remove
them to missions and the right to enquire how the missions expended their subsidies. Provisions were also included to enable the Department to take legal action to force fathers of part-Aboriginal children in missions to pay for their maintenance. The existing permissory system of employment of Aborigines under contract and the indenture of children were to be abolished and replaced by a system based on compulsory permits and agreements. All employers were to seek permits from local protectors before entering into agreements with their Aboriginal employees and, in this way, the employment of Aborigines by "undesirables" (referred to specifically as Japanese and Malay employers) was to be rigidly controlled. The age at which Aborigines could enter into agreements with their employers was set at eighteen. Aboriginal workers were to be supervised in employment by the Chief Protector and the protectors, while employers were to seek redress against their employees under the provisions of the Masters and Servants Act. The Bill also allowed for the removal of Aborigines to reserves. Their presence around the towns was to be strictly limited through provisions allowing for the gazetting of prohibited areas and the removal of Aborigines and Aboriginal camps from the vicinity of the towns. The Bill also contained the provisions proposed by Prinsep to limit miscegenation and the supply of alcohol to part-Aborigines.

There was little of the outrage expressed by Forrest to Prinsep's original Bill during the subsequent debate in the Legislative Council. Ironically, the Bill appealed both to the 'humanitarians' who saw protection as a way of 'saving' the Aboriginal race or at least slowing down the rate of decimation of the population, and to those with a racist perspective who simply wanted Aborigines removed from the community and cared little for their fate. Meanwhile the few
politicians of Forrest's views reserved their objections when they were assured that the government would be "cautious" in using its new powers over Aborigines. It is not surprising therefore that there were few criticisms from either side of the House on the repressive and segregationalist nature of the Bill, and that discussion focussed on the proposed system of employment and the appropriate size and purpose of the reserves. Debate on these issues was dominated by the pastoralists' determination to protect their employment arrangements and by their opposition to any encroachment on their land-holdings through the creation of large areas of land reserved for the use of Aborigines.

The pastoralists objected to the proposed new system of employment and warned that if introduced it would lead to massive dismissals of Aborigines employed in the pastoral industry. They demanded that employers of "suitable reputation" be allowed to take out general permits to employ an unlimited number of Aborigines and that the age of responsibility for Aborigines entering into agreements be reduced to fourteen as "the aborigines...mature[d] early, and the most useful years of their life [were] between fourteen and twenty-five". They also opposed the creation of large reserves for Aborigines on the grounds that bringing large disparate groups of Aborigines together in the one area would lead to the outbreak of "tribal disputes" and that the costs of ensuring that Aborigines remained on the reserves would be prohibitive. They asserted that while the notion of "large reservations" was suitable for indigenous people of "a higher order of civilisation" such as the American Indians, it was inappropriate for Aborigines who would not observe "the rules and regulations keeping them within a confined area which [were] directly contrary to their habits of life and tribal traditions".
Instead they recommended that areas be set aside near towns for unemployed Aborigines to "render easier the task of keeping them as free as possible from the malign influences of depraved whites and to provide them with a recognised camping ground". 99

The recommendations of the Select Committee appointed to consider the Bill reflected the continued dominance of the pastoralists in the Legislative Council. The Committee recommended that employers should be allowed to employ Aborigines under permit only and that where further surety was required they should be encouraged to enter into agreements with their employees and that Aborigines should be allowed to enter into agreements from the age of fourteen. It also recommended the inclusion of the clause from the 1892 amendment of the 1886 Aborigines Protection Act which allowed for the imprisonment of Aboriginal employees for a maximum of three months for breach of contract. The size of Aboriginal reserves should be limited to two thousand acres and, to avoid unnecessary hardship for white men charged with cohabitation, the clause placing a minimum fine on breaches of the Act should be removed. 100

These amendments, agreed to in the Council in December 1904, served to greatly reduce the impact of the Bill in providing for protection of Aborigines in employment and in setting aside adequate reserved areas for their occupation. Before the Bill could be passed on to the Legislative Assembly, however, Parliament went into Christmas recess and debate was postponed until after the publication of the report of the Roth Royal Commission. Nevertheless, the final Bill introduced to Parliament in 1905 following the report of the Roth Royal Commission reflected very strongly the ideas which Prinsep had built into the 1904 Bill.
The Roth Royal Commission

At the time of his appointment as Royal Commissioner, Roth was Protector of Aborigines in Northern Queensland. He had considerable experience in Aboriginal affairs and in the administration of the 1897 Queensland legislation (the segregationalist aims of which he strongly supported) and was an ethnologist of repute, having published several articles on the Australian Aborigines. A crucial factor in his appointment apart from his expertise was that as an 'outsider' to the state he would be seen as an impartial observer by the state's critics, particularly in Britain. Nevertheless, Roth was still a fairly contentious figure, having campaigned against the ill-treatment of Aborigines in his own state, and the West Australian government was by no means assured of receiving a favourable report from him. 101

Under the terms of the Royal Commission Roth was to inquire into the following matters: the administration of the Aborigines Department; the employment of Aborigines; the native police system; the treatment of Aboriginal prisoners; the distribution of relief to Aborigines; and the general treatment and condition of the "Aboriginal and half-caste inhabitants of Western Australia". Although the terms of reference did not formally limit the Commissioner's investigations to any particular area of the state, it was intended that he should concentrate on conditions in the north and the Department planned an itinerary taking in the coastal and inland areas of the northwest and the Kimberley. Pressed for time and limited by the difficulties of travel inland during the wet season, Roth collected evidence only in northern coastal areas and in Perth. He did not visit the south of the state or the goldfields. In his published report Roth presented evidence from 42 witnesses.* Of

* Biskup (1973) states that Roth interviewed 110 witnesses, however only 42 of these interviews were published.
these only two were Aborigines (both prisoners in Wyndham jail) and only six were not residing in the north. They were the Chief Protector of Aborigines, the Aborigines Department's clerk and accountant, the Commissioner of Police, the Sheriff and Comptroller of Prisons, the Manager of the Swan Native and Half-caste Home and a priest from the New Norcia Benedictine Mission. With the exception of the two mission representatives, these witnesses were questioned largely in relation to their duties in the north.

The Report of the Roth Royal Commission,\textsuperscript{102} tabled in Parliament in January 1905, was a balanced document which adhered closely to its terms of reference and to the evidence supplied by witnesses before the Commission. While the thrust of the Report and its recommendations was directed to the situation of Aborigines in the north of the state, reference was also made to conditions in other parts of the state and some recommendations in the Report were intended to deal specifically with Aborigines in these areas. Other more sweeping recommendations had implications for Aborigines throughout the state. Roth's findings did not fully substantiate the allegations of cruelty in settled areas of the north, although he did find evidence of wrongs and injustices and of cruelty and abuse in less settled areas. However, he did not lay the blame directly on the pastoralists but stated that these practices stemmed largely from the mal-administration of the Aborigines and Police Departments. The Chief Protector lacked the power to provide for the protection of Aborigines in the state or to influence government officers carrying out his duties at the local level, and the issue of rations and the work of the missions went on without any regular Departmental inspection. Roth's most outspoken criticisms were of the treatment of Aborigines by the police, which he described as "most brutal and
outrageous". He condemned the system under which police officers were able to draw "blood money" for feeding Aboriginal prisoners in their care, the prevalent use of neck chains by police and prison officers in the north and the manner in which cases involving Aborigines were conducted and the nature of the sentences imposed by the local benches. Apart from the use of neck chains, Roth found the treatment of Aboriginal prisoners by prison officers in the north to be "most humane". The pastoralists were not totally absolved from blame and Roth stated that the system of employment of Aborigines in the pastoral industry acted very much in favour of the employers. Few Aborigines were employed under the provisions of the 1886 Aborigines Protection Act, and while this absolved employers from any obligation to provide minimum levels of payment to their employees they nevertheless availed themselves of the services of the police to return absconding Aborigines to their stations. Roth also addressed himself to the matter of sexual abuse of Aboriginal women in the north and reported that "drunkenness and prostitution...with consequent loathsome disease" were rife amongst Aborigines on the East Kimberley coast. He also pointed to the growing number of part-Aboriginal children in the state and warned that left to their own devices "their future [would] be one of vagabondism and harlotry".

Roth advised that the most appropriate method for preventing continued abuse of Aborigines in the north was through the establishment of appropriate administrative and legislative procedures to regulate relations between Aborigines and whites. He made a range of recommendations in relation to the system of justice in the north,

* Roth found that only 369 out of 4,000 Aborigines employed in the pastoral industry were employed under contract.
but his recommendations concerning the Aborigines Department held implications for Aborigines throughout the state. He recommended the immediate introduction of the 1904 Aborigines Bill, with a few minor amendments and additions. He was particularly concerned to see the powers of the Chief Protector broadened and increased (as outlined in the Bill) with the added proviso that the Chief Protector should have the right to inspect Aboriginal missions. Roth also recommended changes to the field system of the Aborigines Department. While supporting the continued use of honorary local protectors, he advised that as far as possible only high-ranking government officers should be appointed to these positions and that they should be assigned defined administrative districts. They should communicate directly with the Chief Protector and provide him with monthly reports on Aboriginal convictions and prosecutions in their districts and on the issue of relief. This would enable the Department to supervise their actions at the local level. In recognition of their extra duties Roth recommended that the protectors be paid an honorarium of £25 to £50 per annum.

Roth also recommended changes to the ration system intended to increase control over the issue of rations and to reduce expenditure. This was to be achieved by reducing the overall number of ration stations and placing the issue of rations in the hands of a single government officer in each magisterial district. Settlers should be gradually phased out of the system altogether. "Able bodied" Aborigines should be encouraged to contribute more to the maintenance of their sick and elderly kin while pastoralists should be obliged to provide for needy Aborigines on their stations.
To provide for the greater protection of Aboriginal workers, Roth recommended the introduction of employment under compulsory permit and/or agreement of twelve months' duration (as contained in the amended 1904 Bill). He also recommended the introduction of a minimum monthly wage of five shillings for Aborigines in employment on land and ten shillings for those employed on boats. In the case of Aborigines in the pastoral industry, this wage could be adjusted according to the number of indigent Aborigines supported by the station owner.

To protect Aborigines from the "demoralising effects of civilisation" Roth recommended the introduction of the policy of social isolation of Aborigines on reserves, contained in the 1897 Queensland legislation and in the original version of the 1904 Bill. In the north large areas of land should be set aside where Aborigines could support themselves from hunting and continue to follow a traditional way of life. In the settled areas of the state, including the south, small reserves should be provided as "sanctuaries and asylums for the indigent, the infirm, and the children" where they could be rationed in an economical manner and brought under the general supervision of the Department. Aborigines could be forced to move to the reserves by having their ration issue cut off. Roth also supported the concept of prohibited areas as a way of keeping Aborigines out of the towns and he also advised that Aborigines' access to alcohol should be strictly controlled. He further strongly supported the introduction of the protective measures contained in the 1904 Bill prohibiting miscegenation and the abuse of Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal women. In the interests of law and order in the north and to prevent attacks by Aborigines on white settlers, Roth recommended the introduction of controls over Aborigines' access to firearms.
Roth also recommended that Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children should be brought under the legal guardianship of the Chief Protector until the age of eighteen and, wherever possible, be placed in missions to be educated and trained. The costs of providing additional accommodation for the children in the missions could be covered by the savings in expenditure achieved through the reorganisation of the ration system as outlined by Roth.

Response to the Roth Report

Despite the mild nature of the Report, Roth's findings aroused considerable controversy in the Western Australian community. Soon after its publication Prinsep noted in his personal diary that there was "a great hubbub in the press and everywhere". The Commissioner of Police, Captain Hare, was suspended from duties after he publicly questioned Roth's qualifications to head the Commission and accused Roth of partiality and of interviewing only the "scum and riff-raff of the North" (although he had himself been interviewed at length). The Comptroller of Prisons, Octavius Burt, was also reprimanded for his public criticisms of Roth's findings. Prinsep on the other hand stated that Roth's findings echoed what he had "for some years been pressing on the legislature" and he told the Morning Herald that while some people considered that he should have "repressed the evils which [were] rife" he lacked the legal power to do so and he referred readers to his Annual Reports which showed "how often and how strongly" he had "pleaded to be given legal powers". Nevertheless in his 1905 Annual Report Prinsep argued strongly against a number of Roth's recommendations, including the introduction of a minimum wage for Aboriginal workers which he claimed would lead to "a general dismissal of blacks from the Stations", the establishment of central
ration depots (he had learnt something from his experiences at Welshpool Reserve) and suggested that a more efficient way of reducing expenditure on rations would be through the appointment of Travelling Inspectors to check on the issue of rations at the local level. Forrest, who still held his seat in the Federal government, described the Report as "somewhat sensational in character" and stated that the appointment of an outsider as Commissioner was "a foolish action". C.H. Rason, the Leader of the Opposition in the state government, accused Roth of jumping to conclusions on the basis of flimsy evidence and the pastoralists asserted that he had preconceived ideas about the situation in the north. The press was divided in its opinion. The Morning Herald and Daily News supported Roth and his recommendations while the West Australian criticised him for failing to suggest an effective policy for future action.

There was considerable public support for Roth's findings. The Council of Churches* and the Roman Catholic Church supported Roth's findings while the Anglican Archbishop, after initially questioning the validity of evidence not given under oath, announced that the Report fully vindicated the allegations of cruelty he had made over the last nine years. The Report was also discussed and supported in a public meeting at the Perth Town Hall late in February 1905.

Two Aborigines wrote to the press commenting on the Report. Fred Mead, a station hand originally from the Bunbury district with thirteen years' experience on stations in the Wyndham district, offered to give additional evidence to Roth and added that without the assistance of certain government officers, including Prinsep

* The Council of Churches represented the Baptist, Methodist, Church of Christ and Presbyterian denominations.
and Commissioner Hare, "a lot of the Swan River natives [would be] dead". William Harris, a mission educated part-Aboriginal farmer from the Morowa district who had also worked on stations in the north-west, criticised Roth for failing to report on the condition of Aborigines on the goldfields. Harris had done prospecting in the eastern goldfields from the turn of the century and was convinced that most of the Aborigines there were starving. However Harris, like his white contemporaries, could suggest no alternative other than increased rations and the rigid exclusion of Aborigines from the towns.

The Report also received attention in Britain and in March 1905 it was discussed in the British House of Commons. The conditions described by Roth were strongly condemned and members stated that they resembled "cruelties committed in the dark ages". The Secretary of State for the Colonies described them as "deplorable" and cabled the Governor in Western Australia urging that Roth's recommendations be implemented as soon as possible.

While opinion on the findings of the Roth Royal Commission was divided, there was general agreement on the need for action. This was motivated to a large extent by the desire to appease the state's critics by presenting the impression of "doing something" to protect Aborigines from cruelty and abuse. However, there was also growing support for a reappraisal of existing state policy on Aboriginal

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* Harris did not allow the matter to rest there and in February 1906 he had an interview in Perth with Premier Rason at which he outlined the situation in the goldfields and presented letters to the Premier supporting his evidence from the Mayor of Kalgoorlie and Leonora. Although Rason agreed to look into the matter no action seems to have resulted from the interview (MH 8,9/2/1906).
affairs and for the introduction of a more interventionist approach to the "Aboriginal problem". It was not until August 1905, after a series of political upheavals and the resignation of the Daglish Labor ministry, that the newly-elected Rason ministry placed a slightly amended version of the 1904 Bill before the Legislative Council.

The 1905 Aborigines Bill

The stated aims of the 1905 Aborigines Bill were as follows: to clarify the legal status of Aborigines in the state; to consolidate existing state legislation pertaining to Aborigines; to provide for the greater protection of Aborigines; to make provision for their welfare, medical care and education; and to prevent the 'extinction' of the Aboriginal race. The Bill drew heavily on Prinsep's Bill of 1904 and also included several of Roth's recommendations. Despite the fact that several politicians proudly asserted that Roth's Report had been completely overlooked in the framing of the Bill, it in fact fitted closely with Roth's basic ideas. These were already incorporated in the 1904 Bill, the introduction of which he had strongly supported in his Report. His recommendations for the introduction of controls over Aborigines' access to firearms, the right of justices to appoint Aborigines to cross-examine witnesses on behalf of Aboriginal defendants and a twelve-month limitation on the period

* There was considerable public concern about Aborigines having access to firearms, particularly in the north of the state. Prinsep reported that there had been several disturbances in the Pilbara district after employers had given Aborigines guns to use in hunting and Dr J.S. Hicks (Roebourne) told the Legislative Assembly during debate on the 1905 Bill that "a few years ago" there had been rumours of a "wide-spread native uprising" in the north. He was probably referring to the armed resistance during the 1890s led by an Aboriginal, Pigeon (Pederson, 1980).
of permits issued to employers of Aborigines were also incorporated in the Bill. However his less acceptable recommendations, such as the introduction of a minimum wage for Aboriginal workers and the changes to the system of ration distribution were rejected. In addition to the above-mentioned recommendations from the Roth Report the Bill also included a clause to legislate retrospectively for the 1897 Aborigines Act which had been declared legally invalid due to several errors and omissions in its proclamation.

Debate on the Bill in both Houses of Parliament was characterised by the "profusion of language and dearth of idea" which typified debate on Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia.* Most politicians argued subjectively, drawing on their own limited experience or on hearsay to support their arguments rather than on documented facts. Few members showed any real sympathy for Aborigines and provisions of unprecedented repression and authoritarianism were discussed with little apparent concern or insight into their implications for Aborigines. One exception was T. Walker (MLA, Labor, Kalgoorlie), who suggested that the Bill would in fact "forge chains for these Black people". However, his forthrightness and enlightened views were exceptional in the pompous and self-interested atmosphere of the debates. Most members were simply concerned to protect white employers or white workers, and to spend as little time and money on Aborigines as possible. Many spoke of Aborigines as if they were little better than animals and the following type of metaphor was not uncommon: "If you put two natives from two districts together,

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* C.H. Rason used this phrase to describe debate on Aboriginal matters during the 1902 Annual Estimates Debate (PD, 22, 1902: 2235).
it would be like putting strange cattle together - in a few hours they would all be gone and no tails left behind". Most speakers expressed a fundamental belief in the ultimate extinction of the Aboriginal race and talked in neo-Darwinian terms of a contest between "barbarianism and civilisation" in which Aborigines were very much the vanquished. A. Horan (Yilgarn) told the Legislative Assembly:

If these people cannot conform to the advancing reforms of civilisation then, under the inexorable laws of the survival of the fittest, they must give way.

C.A. Piesse (South East), referred to on several occasions as one of the few 'experts' on Aborigines in Parliament, told the Legislative Assembly:

All we can do is to protect them as far as possible and leave nature to do the rest. It is a case of the survival of the fittest but let the fittest do their best.

Roth also came in for criticism during the debates and E.M. McClarty (South West) stated that if the members knew as much of "that man" as he did they would "not give much for his evidence", while J. Isdell (Pilbara) stated simply, "as to Doctor Roth, I may say I have never believed in him". However, despite the lengthy and fiery debate there was little constructive discussion of the nature of the proposed legislation and in the long run the amendments proposed in both Houses were only of minimal importance.

The Bill passed quickly through the Legislative Council where it had been effectively debated in 1904. While there were some minor objections to certain provisions pertaining to employment, most employers agreed with R.F. Sholl (North) that the Bill acted to protect Aborigines without unduly interfering with employers. Under
the system of employment employers were to take out permits (single or general) to employ Aborigines and were under no obligation to enter into agreements. Permits were to be issued by local honorary protectors who were hardly likely to refuse them to pastoralists who were generally powerful and influential figures in the northern communities. However, Sholl recommended that safeguards be built into the Bill to prevent subsequent governments from adding a minimum wage clause for Aboriginal workers and warned that

...with this idea of White Australia the time may come when we have a Ministry in power which may prefer to keep the Aboriginal population in idleness, and may insist that all the sheep stations be worked by White labour only.\[121\]

Debate in the Legislative Assembly was intense and was characterised by strong conflict between the pastoralists and the anti-pastoralist lobby led by T. Walker. He asserted that the Bill was a "protest" against the pastoralists and was intended to destroy the "power of the lusts of those brutes who exist in very large numbers in the north".\[122\] Debate focussed on the proposed system of employment and the size and purpose of the reserves. Generally, the pastoralists were resigned to accepting the system of employment under permit and most were of the opinion that the system contained in the 1905 Bill would serve to silence their critics without interfering unduly with their existing employment arrangements. Nevertheless they did object to certain details in the system such as the twelve month limitation on the period of employment of Aborigines under permit. Walker led the attack on the permit system, referring to it as "another name for slavery" and alleging that it was as much a system of "bondage" as the existing system of employment.\[123\] While he
appeared to be arguing on largely humanitarian grounds, his Labor Party colleagues were concerned that the Bill made no real changes and that it would not lead to the creation of employment possibilities for white workers. Certainly the system contained in the 1905 Bill was less stringent than the controls over employers of Aborigines and access to Aboriginal employment contained in the Bill introduced by the Daglish Labor government in 1904.

Few speakers objected to the notion of reserves as places where Aborigines could live free from the "contaminating influences" of alcohol, miscegenation and venereal disease, although some objected that the enforced removal of Aborigines to reserves and the obligation on those absent from the reserves to carry special permits came close to treating them like "convicts". As in 1904 the major disagreement was over the size and purpose of reserves. The pastoralists advocated the creation of small camping grounds while Walker, accusing them of being "niggardly" and "loath to part with the land", demanded "genuine reforms" and recommended the setting aside of large tracts of land in the north where Aborigines could be taught industries and handicrafts to enable them to become self-supporting as had been done with Indians in North America. He succeeded in having the limitation on the size of the reserves struck out, however, it was reinstated in the Legislative Council. While debate focussed on reserves in the north, there was also some discussion of the purpose and nature of reserves in the south which, it was generally agreed, should be small camping grounds where Aborigines could live away from the "demoralising influence" of the towns and where they would not be a "nuisance" to the white community.

The status of part-Aborigines under the Act and the education of their children were also discussed. Under the Bill "half-castes"
who associated with Aborigines were to be deemed Aborigines, while those who lived a European way of life were to be included only under certain provisions. This affected part-Aboriginal women and children in particular as they were included under most clauses of the Bill. Most speakers supported these measures and Isdell, arguing for strict controls over sexual contact between part-Aboriginal women and non-Aboriginal men, claimed that they would serve to promote a "White Australia" rather than a "piebald one". Other speakers welcomed the introduction of provisions to prevent part-Aborigines from drinking in hotels "like white men". However, Walker argued strongly against the principle of legal classifications based on race and warned that this could lead to the American situation where a person "with a black spot or his finger could be sold into slavery". He opposed the application of the provisions to quadroons and succeeded in having this limitation added to the Bill. He also argued that part-Aborigines who lived a European way of life should not be included under the legislation and enquired about the legal status of a man of the calibre of the Aboriginal spokesman William Harris. He was assured that part-Aborigines of a suitable "degree of civilisation" would be exempted from the provisions of the Bill under the special exemption clause.

There was general agreement that "half-caste" children, referred to as "the white man's child", should be brought under the legal guardianship of the Chief Protector and placed in missions to be trained to become "useful citizens". Isdell told the Legislative Assembly that allowing the children to be reared by their families was "wrong, unjust and a disgrace to the State", and that it was "maudlin sentiment" to worry about the feelings of Aboriginal mothers as they forgot about their children "in twenty-four hours and as
THE ABORIGINES ACT, 1905.

PROCLAMATION.

Western Australia to sit.

BY HIS EXCELLENCY ADJUTANT SIR Frederick
George Edmund Bedford, Knight Grand Cross
of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath,
Governor in and over the State of Western
Australia and its Dependencies etc. etc., etc.,

WHEREAS a Bill for an Act intitled "An Act to make provision
for the better protection and care of the Aborigines Inhabitants
of Western Australia" was duly passed by the Legislative Council
and Legislative Assembly and was on the 23rd day of December, 1905
received by me for the signification of His Majesty's pleasure
thereon: NOT THEREFORE I, the said Governor do by this Proclamation
admit that the said Bill was duly laid before His Majesty in
council, and that His Majesty on the 4th day of April, 1906,
was pleased to assent to the same; and I the said Governor, with
the advice of the Executive Council, do hereby fix the thirtieth
day of April, 1906, as the day on which the said Act shall come
into operation.

GIVEN under my hand and the Public Seal of the
said State, at Perth, this 23th day of April, 1906.

BY HIS EXCELLENCY'S COMAND.

Proclamation of the 1905 Aborigines Act
a rule...[were] glad to be rid of [them]." However, there was little interest in educating Aboriginal children and Butcher (Gascoyne) described the proposal as "absurd", while A. Male (MLA, Kimberley) asserted that Aborigines were "demoralised" rather than "bettered" by education.

The 1905 Aborigines Act

The Aborigines Act was proclaimed in April 1906. Its stated aim was to "make provision for the better protection and care of the Aboriginal inhabitants of Western Australia". They were to be accorded special protection in the work place and "for their own good" their participation in the wider community was to be strictly controlled. Where necessary they were to be excluded altogether and segregated on Aboriginal reserves. Meanwhile their children, particularly those of part-Aboriginal descent, were to be taken from them and placed in missions to be trained to become "useful" workers and citizens. Aborigines were to continue to receive separate welfare and education and the Aborigines Department was to combine its existing duties with those of implementing the restrictive provisions of the Act and intervening directly to "protect" the interests of Aborigines. The Act applied to a wider range of persons of Aboriginal descent than any previous legislation and most Aborigines and part-Aborigines in the state now found themselves subject to a wide range of restrictions on their personal liberties and stripped of their status as citizens. This was to have important implications for the predominantly part-Aboriginal population in the south, many of whom had been excluded from previous discriminatory legislation pertaining to Aborigines, and who were in no need of the special "protection" of the Aborigines Department. Writers such as Biskup
(1973) and Bolton (1981) have argued that this was largely unintentional and that the Act was designed to deal with the situation of the "full-blood" populations of the north. However, as has been indicated, there was growing pressure in Western Australia for part-Aborigines to be included with Aborigines in the special legislation. This reflected changing attitudes to part-Aborigines. In addition, Prinsep was particularly keen to gain the power to force part-Aborigines in the south to follow a European way of life.

Under the 1905 Act the Aborigines Department became a full government department under the control of a Chief Protector of Aborigines responsible to the Minister in charge of the Department. The Department's welfare duties remained essentially unchanged: it was to continue to promote

> ...the welfare of the aborigines, providing them with food, clothing and medicine, and medical attention when they would otherwise be destitute, providing for the education of aboriginal children, and generally assisting in the preservation and well-being of the aborigines.

However, a wider range of persons of Aboriginal descent were to come under the Department's welfare umbrella and, in recognition of this and the Department's broader responsibilities, the Act allowed for the doubling of its annual grant to £10,000. No changes were made to the administrative structure of the Department and it was to continue to operate as a small Perth based office operating through honorary protectors at the local level.

The Act incorporated sweeping powers to allow for the rigid control of Aborigines. The Governor now had the power to declare prohibited areas for Aborigines in addition to Aboriginal reserves and to make regulations for virtually any purpose relating to the
administration of the Act. The Minister in charge of the Department could order the removal of unemployed Aborigines to reserves under warrant and exempt persons from the obligation to remain on the reserves or from the provisions of the Act. The Chief Protector became the legal guardian of virtually all children of Aboriginal descent to the age of sixteen, with the power to remove needy and orphaned children to missions or other government institutions. The children's missions themselves were brought more closely under the control of the Department: they ceased to come under the provisions of the 1874 Industrial Schools Act and were categorised as "Aboriginal institutions" under the 1905 Act instead. This gave the Department greater control over the process of enforced assimilation of Aboriginal children and also served to further separate the institutional care of Aboriginal children and white children, and this acted to further disadvantage Aboriginal children. The Chief Protector also had the power to manage property and earnings of Aborigines, either with their permission or without it, if he deemed that this was necessary. In addition, his permission was required before a marriage could be celebrated between any Aboriginal woman and non-Aboriginal man. He also had all the powers formally vested in the honorary protectors of Aborigines.

The increase in the powers of the local protectors was marked and many provisions of the Act were designed to be carried out solely at the local level. In addition to functioning as channels of welfare and "protection" for Aborigines, they were now required to regulate Aborigines' relations with the wider community and to see generally to the rigid enforcement of the provisions of the 1905 Act. They controlled access to the employment of all Aborigines and "half-caste" women and all male "half-castes" to the age of fourteen through the
issue of permits and agreements. They could refuse to issue these to persons they considered to be unsuitable as employers of Aborigines or cancel any already in force. In cooperation with the police they were to supervise all such persons in employment and could initiate proceedings on their behalf against employers for the recovery of unpaid wages and breaches of agreement. They also controlled the movement of Aborigines in settled areas and thereby their contacts with the wider community. They had the right to enter any Aboriginal camp and could order Aborigines to move their camps from the vicinity of towns and municipalities and call on the assistance of the police in executing this duty. Employers wishing to move Aborigines between magisterial districts had to apply to the protector for a recognizance and deposit a sum with the protector to cover the costs of their employee's return journey. The protectors also controlled Aborigines' access to firearms through the issue of gun licences and could confiscate any unlicensed guns belonging to Aborigines. Justices of the Peace decided on the manner of disposal of confiscated guns. With the Minister's permission, protectors could initiate legal proceedings to obtain maintenance payments from fathers of "half-caste" children in missions. Any maintenance was to be paid directly to the Colonial Treasurer and expended as he directed. Protectors also had the power to direct any person offending against the provisions of the 1905 Act to appear before the nearest Court of Petty Sessions. Despite the broad range of powers granted to the protectors, the Act failed to provide the Aborigines Department with the power to control the way in which protectors executed their duties or used their powers or even to oblige them to carry out their duties. This created the potential for considerable abuse and dereliction of duty by protectors at the local level.
Police officers and Justices of the Peace were also granted special duties and powers over Aborigines. In addition to those mentioned above they were to order "loitering" or "indecently dressed" Aborigines to leave the vicinity of towns. The police were to lay charges against all persons offending against the Act and it was their sole responsibility to charge non-Aboriginal persons with cohabitation with Aboriginal women and the supply of alcohol to Aborigines. In the case of Aborigines offending against the Act, the police did not require a warrant to make an arrest. The Act left the police with very special powers over Aborigines. Given existing Departmental practice, there was every likelihood of police being appointed as honorary protectors and, combined with their special duties under the 1905 Act and their existing powers as police officers, this gave them unprecedented powers over Aborigines in the state.

The Act followed earlier precedents in legislation pertaining to Aborigines by allowing local courts consisting of a Resident Magistrate or, in his absence, two Justices of the Peace, to hear cases involving offences against the Act. Harsh penalties were introduced to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Act. Local courts could impose sentences of up to six months' imprisonment, with or without hard labour, or maximum fines of £50. In the case of persons convicted of supplying alcohol to Aborigines there was a maximum fine of £20 while offences against the regulations to the Act could bring a maximum fine of £20 or one month's imprisonment. Justices could appoint persons to cross-examine witnesses on behalf of Aboriginal defendants and it rested with them to decide whether a person of Aboriginal descent appearing before the bench came under the provisions of the Act. As will be discussed later, this system
of justice contained very real disabilities for Aborigines and greatly increased their chances of imprisonment.

As has been indicated, the Act applied to a wider range of persons of Aboriginal descent than any previous legislation in the state and many, particularly in the south, who were unaffected by existing laws pertaining to Aborigines were brought under its restrictive provisions. The 1905 Act maintained the definition of "Aboriginal native" contained in the 1886 Aborigines Protection Act based on blood line and lifestyle. Thus all persons of full descent and persons with one Aboriginal parent and who lived with Aborigines were automatically deemed to be "Aboriginal natives" within the meaning of the Act. Certain other persons of part descent who did not associate with Aborigines were also deemed to be "Aboriginal natives" and from 1905 any "half-caste" child or any "half-caste" adult married to an Aboriginal was automatically categorised as an "Aboriginal native" under the Act. The Act also extended the application of these definitions to all legislation pertaining to Aborigines so that provisions previously applying only to persons of the full descent now applied to these part-Aborigines as well. In 1905 this legislation included: the amendment to the 1902 Criminal Code allowing for the summary punishment of Aborigines pleading guilty to charges which were not capital offences; the Dogs Act of 1903 which allowed male Aborigines to own one unlicensed dog and which permitted police to shoot any excess unlicensed dogs found in Aboriginal camps; S.127 of the 1900 Commonwealth Constitution Act which stated that Aborigines were not to be counted in the national census. Those persons with an Aboriginal mother and other than an Aboriginal father and who lived apart from Aborigines were classified as "half-caste" and they only came under the provisions of the Act pertaining to
the management of property by the Chief Protector, the movement of
camps by local protectors, entry to prohibited areas, the supply
of alcohol and the recovery of wages on their behalf by local
protectors. In addition, female "half-castes" of any age and male
"half-castes" to the age of fourteen were included under all sections
pertaining to the employment of Aborigines. Persons of less than
half-descent were specifically excluded from the definition of "half-
caste" but by some oversight on the part of the legislators were
legally included in the definition of "Aboriginal native" in the Act.
As will be discussed later, the complexities and anomalies of these
definitions created the potential for administrators as well as police
and local courts to treat all persons with an Aboriginal appearance
as one and the same under the Act.

As has been indicated, the Act also allowed for the exemption
of Aborigines and part-Aborigines from its provisions and this was
intended to free persons who had attained a "suitable degree of
civilisation" from the Act's legal disabilities. The Minister was
to decide on applicants' suitability for exemption; however, the
Act contained no guidelines to direct him in making his decisions.
Persons refused exemption had no right to appeal against the
Minister's decision. This arrangement was to prove most unfortunate
as Ministers, acting on the advice of the Aborigines Department and
the local protectors, consistently refused to approve applications
for exemption. Persons granted exemption remained subject to the
special provisions pertaining to "Aborigines" and "half-castes" in
other statutes and their "privilege" of exemption could be revoked
at any time by the Minister.

The 1905 legislation left Aborigines in the south in an un-
enviable situation. By placing them in a special legal category,
the Act drove a wedge between them and the wider community and created special impediments for Aborigines wishing to interact with Europeans. At the same time they were denied their rights as citizens and their personal liberties were severely restricted. The Aborigines Department and its agents at the local level could intervene in the most personal aspects of their lives and families through the controls over cohabitation, marriage, and Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children. The people could no longer determine where they would live and camp and they could be ordered out of towns and kept out of prohibited areas altogether. They also faced the prospect of being moved to small reserves or isolated in camping areas away from the towns. Persons who objected to these controls could be charged under the Act. Their ability to earn a livelihood was affected by the special provisions pertaining to employment which placed special restrictions on access to Aboriginal workers and which allowed Protectors and police to intervene directly in relations between Aboriginal workers and their employers. At the same time the Act failed to stipulate standard minimal working conditions or payment for Aboriginal workers. The wide range of offences for which Aborigines could be charged under the Act and the system of justice contained in the Act greatly increased their likelihood of being sent to prison. A wider range of persons of Aboriginal descent in the south were now to come under the Department's welfare umbrella and were thereby denied access to the better quality services available to the wider community. This also applied in the case of education. In addition, while whites had access to a range of government departments and services and could therefore retain a degree of anonymity and freedom to "play the system" or simply to maintain their sense of independence and privacy, Aborigines were obliged
to apply to the Department for all their needs. The likelihood that Aborigines who offended in one area would be penalised in another was high, and this was particularly so at the local level where honorary protectors had very special powers over Aborigines. The administration of welfare through the same channels as control and repression was to prove a major disability for Aborigines in the south.

**Conclusion**

The transfer of control over Aboriginal affairs from the British to the colonial government led to a dramatic deterioration in the situation of Aborigines in Western Australia. Expenditure on Aboriginal welfare was drastically curtailed and from this time economy and expediency dominated the actions of the Aborigines Department in providing for the material needs of Aborigines and the education of their children. At the same time, criticism of the treatment of Aborigines in the pastoral industry and, to a lesser extent, Prinsep's concern at the deteriorating condition of Aborigines particularly in remote areas of the state, led the government to adopt a more interventionist role in relation to Aborigines. The 1905 Aborigines Act enshrined the new policy of intervention represented by Prinsep. It incorporated the aims of "protection" and the rigid segregation of Aborigines from the wider community and granted sweeping powers over persons of Aboriginal descent to the Aborigines Department, thereby fulfilling Prinsep's desire for greater administrative powers and controls. Ostensibly intended to provide for the greater protection of persons of Aboriginal descent, the Act allowed the government to deal with Aborigines virtually as it wished and to guide and control their behaviour in the interests of the
wider community. Although the Act was designed primarily to deal with the situation of Aborigines in the north of the state, it was also intended to increase controls over persons of mixed Aboriginal descent, particularly in relation to miscegenation, consumption of alcohol, their presence around towns and settled areas and their children, who were to be removed from their families and placed in missions to be trained to take their place in the wider community. This had fundamental implications for the predominantly mixed descent Aboriginal population in the south, many of whom had been previously unaffected by special legislation pertaining to Aborigines.
FOOTNOTES – Chapter Two

1. 61 Vict. No. 5, 1897.
2. Royal Commission into the Public Service, WAVP, 2, Paper 14, 1903-04.
3. A/830/1900.
5. A/560/1900; A/263/1904.
10. Aveling, 1979: 50.
11. A/830/1900.
12. Ibid.
13. PD, 19, 1901: 634.
15. Prinsep Papers (family collection).
22. Prinsep Papers (family collection).
26. Ibid.
27. Prinsep Papers (family collection).
30. PD, 22, 1902: 2195.
34. AR/1899.
35. A/512/1898.
36. A/74/1898.
37. A/560/1898.
38. A/512/1898.
40. A/261/1898.
42. A/4/1902; A/211/1902.
43. Marchant, 1982.
44. A/39/1899.
45. Marchant, 1981.
47. A/396/1904.
49. A/263/1904.
50. A/830/1900.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
57. PD, 14, 1899: 203.
58. A/830/1900.
60. AR/1899.
62. LS/2455/1894.
63. A/3/1902.
64. LS/2915/1888; A/3/1903; A/538/1904; New Norcia Records.
65. A/3/1903.
67. A/44/1901.
68. A/3/1903.
70. A/200/1905.
72. AR/1905: 12.
73. A/491/1910.
74. A/12/1903.
75. A/321/1902.
76. Ibid.
77. A/679/1906.
78. Prinsep Diaries, 7/6/1905.
84. PD, 19, 1901: 627.
85. Ibid: 628.
86. Ibid: 628.
88. Ibid: 632.
90. Ibid.
91. PD, 21, 1902: 901.
92. PD, 22, 1902: 2224.
93. Ibid: 2227.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid: 1674 ff.
102. Roth, 1905.
103. Prinsep's Diaries, 4/2/1905.
105. MH 1/2/1905.
106. WA 4/2/1905.
107. WA 3/2/1905.
108. WA 2/2/1905.
110. WA 13/2/1905.
111. WA 25/2/1905.
112. WA 25/2/1905.
113. MH 9/2/1906.
115. PD, 28, 1905: 315.
118. *Ibid*: 140.
123. *Ibid*.
133. 5 Edw. VII, No. 14 of 1905.
CHAPTER THREE

Introduction

The 1905 Aborigines Act brought few improvements in the administration of Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia and in the situation of the state's Aboriginal population. The Aborigines Department continued to be hampered in carrying out its duties by the indifference of the government, the ineptitude of its chief administrators, and insufficient funding and resources. This led to a continued focus on economy and expediency in providing special services for Aborigines, at the expense of their real needs. From 1905 there was a gradual tightening up in the distribution of relief and a marked trend towards the centralisation of services for Aborigines. There was also a strong move towards providing for Aborigines in segregated, institutionalised settings. At the same time the Department's increased dependence on the police to carry out its duties at the local level and in implementing the Act created the potential for the rigid control and repression of Aborigines throughout the state.

In keeping with the concerns of the Roth Royal Commission and the associated public debate, the thrust of the Department between 1906 and 1911 was on the north. However, there were also changes for Aborigines in the south. The centralisation of the distribution of relief in the town police stations forced many destitute Aborigines out of the bush and into town camps, while the Department used its new powers to forcibly remove an increasing number of part-Aboriginal children from their families to be reared in missions instead. The trend in the Department towards segregation and institutionalisation was evidenced in the south in the creation of a small number of
camping reserves in towns along the southern coastal strip and in new ideas about the role of the children's missions. The "protective" measures in the 1905 Act were only partially enforced in the south during this period. The responsibility for their implementation fell largely on the police who focussed their efforts on limiting Aborigines' access to alcohol, their entry to towns and miscegenation. This brought increasing hardship for Aborigines when the provisions were implemented repressively to protect white rather than Aboriginal interests.

The Aborigines Department

Following the successful passage of the 1905 Aborigines Act, most members of the West Australian Parliament felt that the state's honour had been restored. Believing that adequate provision had been made for the "protection and care" of Aborigines, they turned their attention to more pressing matters of state. As a result of this indifference the Department was left to struggle along as best it could and there were few real improvements or changes in the administration of Aboriginal affairs.

Although the 1905 Act raised the Department to the status of a full government department, this proved to be in name only. It continued to be treated as a small and unimportant sub-department and it remained at the bottom of the public service hierarchy. The practice of assigning ministerial control of the Department to the Colonial Secretary, along with a welter of other minor departments,*

* Other departments, sub-departments and offices placed under the umbrella of the Colonial Secretary's Department were: Public Charities, State Labour Bureau, State Children, Fisheries, Gaols, Harbour and Lights, Immigration and Tourism Agency, Observatory, Registrar General's Office, Registrar of Friendly Societies, Public Gardens, Industrial Schools,
was maintained. This was an unfortunate arrangement. Unless the incumbent had a particular interest in Aboriginal affairs, the Department stood to suffer and the accountability of the Department to the government and the public was also thereby diminished. In addition, the Department's officers had greater power over their charges than virtually any other government instrumentality and were in special need of close ministerial supervision. At the same time, in the interests of economy and expediency the government established the precedent of combining the Department with other, largely unrelated, administrative areas. This was to have adverse consequences for the administration of Aboriginal affairs. The Department's broad range of duties, together with its vast geographical area of responsibility, required the full-time attention of its officers, while the work of the Department demanded officers with specialist expertise. Such expertise was to remain sadly lacking and over the years the government continued to appoint officers who were "mediocracies, men without courage, devoid of new ideas" to the Department.¹

The provision in the 1905 Act for the doubling of the Department's annual grant made little difference in real terms and, in fact, during the first year of its operation the annual grant fell by £1,000. Although funding rose to a record level £45,938 in 1911,* this was not equalled again until 1938. This adversely affected the quality of services offered by the Department, which were invariably inferior to those provided for even the most depopulated

* The Department's annual grant was increased to this level to cover the costs of resuming twenty-eight pastoral leases on the Wyndham-Halls Creek Road in the East Kimberley for the establishment of the Department's first cattle station, Moola Bulla (Biskup, 1973).
members of the white community. They were also provided to Aborigines in ways which suited the needs of the Department but not the wishes of the Aborigines.

**Local Administration and the Role of the Police**

Inadequate funds prevented the Department from developing the Department’s field staff to fully implement the provisions of the 1905 Act and to carry out their duties. The Rason government's promise to appoint a protector in the north immediately below the Chief Protector failed to eventuate and instead, in 1907, two Travelling Inspectors were appointed, one to patrol in the Kimberleys and northwest (excluding the Ashburton) and the other to patrol in the remainder of the state. They were to inspect and report on the treatment and conditions of Aborigines in their respective areas and to exercise a general supervision over the activities of local protectors and employers of Aborigines. However, the Travelling Inspectors were regarded by the government as "luxury items", rather than as an integral part of the administration and they were hired and fired in accordance with available funding. In addition, they concentrated their efforts on the north of the state, so that there was little real supervision in the south.

At the local level, government officers and private citizens were appointed as honorary protectors and acted as the main point of contact between the Department and Aborigines. They were to see that the provisions of the 1905 Act were enforced, attend to the welfare needs of Aborigines, represent Aborigines in court, provide statistical information for Departmental records and reports on individual Aborigines, and exercise a general supervision over all matters relating to Aborigines. The Department communicated with
them by means of printed circulars, notices in the Government Gazette, and correspondence as the need arose.

Little notice was taken of Roth's recommendations as to the nature of these appointments. Although the Minister began by appointing high-ranking government officials as protectors, as recommended by Roth, from mid 1906 increasing numbers of police constables and even private citizens were appointed. No consideration was given to their suitability for the work and, although Roth had recommended that each protector should be responsible for a particular district, several protectors were appointed in some magisterial districts, and this led to a confusion of responsibilities. Again, Roth's recommendation that protectors be paid an honorarium in recognition of their extra duties was not followed.

The police were to play a fundamental role in the Department's field system from this time. In addition to those specifically appointed as protectors, police throughout the state had special duties in relation to Aborigines under the 1905 Act and the

* In May 1906 all Government Residents, Resident Magistrates, Inspectors of Police, and Sub-Inspectors of Police throughout the state were appointed as protectors of Aborigines (GC, 18/5/1906).

** In June 1906 sixteen police constables and fifteen non-government personnel (mainly missionaries and station owners) were appointed as protectors. Those appointed in the south were as follows: Constable J. Shield, Moora; C.E. Dempster, Northam; J.P. Gorman, Bremer Bay; Rt. Rev. Father Torres and Planas, New Norcia; C.A. Piesse, Wagin; R. Sinclair, Wagin; Staff Captain, Salvation Army, Collie (GC, 23/6/1906).
Policeman and Aboriginal, Ravensthorpe, c. 1900
Regulations issued under the 1892 Police Act.* They were also expected to play a major role in enforcing the provisions of the 1905 Act. As Gill (1975) points out, they were in more regular contact with Aborigines than officers of any other government department, including the Aborigines Department. Several commentators** have referred to the problems inherent in the "dual role" of the police who were called on to act both as protectors and prosecutors of Aborigines. In fact it is more appropriate to use Eggleston's term "multiplicity of functions"² as there were few matters relating to Aborigines over which the police did not have some some potential control.

* Two sets of Regulations pertaining specifically to Aborigines were passed early this century. They relate mainly to police duties in the north of the state and were probably passed following the publication of the Roth Report. Under the first set of Regulations, police officers were instructed to ensure that Aborigines in their district were employed under the conditions of the 1886 Aborigines Protection Act and they were specifically prohibited from assisting employers without the required contracts to force Aboriginal workers to return to their employ. They were also to actively discourage sexual contact between Aboriginal women and men from pearling crews and any acts of immorality against Aboriginal children. They were only to arrest Aborigines for cattle killing where they had direct evidence and were to keep the number of witnesses brought into court to testify in cases involving Aborigines to an absolute minimum. All rations purchased while travelling with Aboriginal prisoners were, as far as possible to be paid for with vouchers (Williams Police Station, Circular Order 12/1905). Under the second set of Regulations police officers were instructed to do all in their power to improve the situation of Aborigines and to treat them with patience and humanity combined with firmness and decisiveness and they were warned that any acts of violence against Aborigines would lead to dismissal from the force. Neck chaining of prisoners was to be used only in special circumstances and all Aboriginal prisoners and witnesses were to be escorted safely back to their home districts. Police assistants were not to be sent out on their own to capture or disperse Aborigines. Police officers were to strictly enforce laws relating to dogs owned by Aborigines and the supply of alcohol to Aborigines (Regulations for the Guidance and Government of the Police Force of Western Australia, n.d.).

** Biskup (1973) states that the combination of welfare and penal sanctions in the role of the police meant that the police often saw their duties as protectors as secondary, while Marchant (1981) refers to the confusion caused when the police were required to provide welfare and protection to Aborigines while at the same time rigorously enforcing the law over them.
It was indeed an unfortunate arrangement. There was every reason to expect high levels of prejudice in the police force and associated discriminatory behaviour. The low legal status of Aborigines served to justify their being held in low esteem and there were pressures on police officers to conform to the attitudes and practices of their own colleagues and of the local white community. Again, their own observations of Aboriginal behaviour (for example they were more likely to see Aborigines in situations of need and dependency on a regular basis) could easily be generalised as being characteristic of the race as a whole, rather than a reflection of poor living conditions and racial prejudice. As their duties in relation to Aborigines increased over the years and impinged on their regular duties and leisure time, police came to look on the Aborigines as a "nuisance".

The close connection between Aborigines and the police held implications for white community attitudes to Aborigines as well. At a time when the role of the police in relation to the white community was becoming less generalised as other government departments took over duties formerly carried out by police, Aboriginal-police relations were moving in the other direction. The perception of whites was that Aborigines were associated with law-breaking and were therefore an undesirable element in the community. Meanwhile, Aborigines were reported to be either afraid of the police or antagonistic towards them. Either way, they could hardly look on the police as their protectors.

The system of using police as local agents of the Department involved fundamental and insurmountable flaws which profoundly affected the administration of Aboriginal affairs. In an 'ideal' bureaucratic structure, each office has relatively fixed duties attached
to it and the offices are ranked in a hierarchy, each position being controlled and supervised by another immediately above it. Office-holders entering this structure are chosen on the basis of merit and suitability for the position. Each office in the hierarchy differs in the degree of status, authority, income, rights and privilege attached to it. The opportunity to move up through this hierarchy of privileges provides the incentive for office-holders to conform to the prescribed directions and aims of the bureaucratic structure as set out in its rules and regulations. Attitudes of colleagues and superiors also provide an informal pressure to conform. 3

The system of local control through which the Aborigines Department operated had little in common with this ideal structure. The Department relied on the assistance of officers who were attached to a different bureaucratic structure with its own hierarchy of duties, responsibilities and accountability and its own directives, aims and rulings. Police officers were moving up through the hierarchy of the Police Department and promotion was not dependent on diligent and sympathetic treatment of Aborigines, but on other factors such as the number of arrests and prosecutions to their credit. The concerns of the police were evident in the Police Department’s Annual Reports which contained a special section on Aborigines outlining the number and nature of Aboriginal convictions in the state.

The police lacked any training or preparation for their work with Aborigines and they carried out their duties simply because they were there, rather than on the basis of any particular interest or expertise. There were few rulings from their own Department or the Aborigines Department to follow, and new officers were frequently
socialized into the job by their colleagues, or were guided by their own personal views on how duties should be carried out. Ill-informed gossip and rumour in the white community often formed their introduction to the local Aboriginal community.

The Aborigines Department had little power to influence the manner in which the police dealt with Aborigines or even to ensure that the police were carrying out their duties as requested. There was also little in the legislation to oblige the police to carry out these duties or to permit the Department to supervise their activities. As will be discussed, these factors contributed to several clashes between the Police and Aborigines Departments. Over the years the Aborigines Department introduced regulations intended to oblige the police to carry out its directives. These had limited success. Most police continued to act in accordance with the interests of their own Department or in response to the pressures of the local white community. The police also remained accountable primarily to their own Department. In practice, this meant that there was considerable variation in how the 1905 Act was implemented at the local level. In most areas the legislation was never enforced in its entirety: it was simply too much for the local police to do this and to carry out their normal police duties. However, as we shall see in this and subsequent chapters, it also meant that Aborigines were subject to the whims of police officers and there was considerable scope for abuse. Police often used their powers under the 1905 Act and their control over the ration system to dominate local Aborigines and to force them to conform to their own ideas of suitable standards of behaviour. Some manipulated the ration system for their own financial gain while others arrested Aborigines unnecessarily and used their powers to influence Aboriginal witnesses.
and defendants to ensure convictions, thereby increasing their chances of promotion through the ranks of the Police Department. Although the nominal duties of the police as protectors increased steadily over the years there were few complaints from local police officers, and many derived considerable personal satisfaction from controlling their own small "black empire".

The Administrators: 1906-1911

In January 1907 the Colonial Secretary in the Newton Moore Liberal government, James Daniel Connolly, assumed ministerial responsibility for the Aborigines Department. Connolly was a Queenslander who came to Western Australia during the 1890s goldrushes and became a successful building contractor in Kalgoorlie and then in 1901 entered the Legislative Council as the member for the North East Province. The main preoccupation of the Wilson ministry was with rural expansion, and Connolly was one of the few social reformers in its ranks. The Agent General, Sir Walter James, described him as "the new spirit which had come to the Colonial Secretary's Office after ten years of deep sleep". Connolly was directly responsible for a range of innovations, including the establishment of a specialist maternity hospital (later King Edward Memorial Hospital for Women) and a children's hospital (later the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children). He also introduced important innovations in the Aborigines Department. He took little action during his first year in charge of the Department, although he had a number of projects in the planning stage. It would appear that he was reserving his energies for the appointment of a new and more active Chief Protector following Prinsep's anticipated retirement. Prinsep seems to have become increasingly disillusioned with his work. In October 1907
he took leave to visit England, and in January 1908 officially retired from the public service. Edmund Pechelle, Prinsep's clerk, ran the Department under the supervision of the Minister, from Prinsep's departure in October until mid-December when the Chief Inspector of Fisheries was appointed Acting Chief Protector of Aborigines.6

Charles F. Gale was officially appointed Chief Protector of Aborigines in January 1908. This was a joint appointment (Gale was already Chief Inspector of Fisheries), and it was motivated by both political and economic factors. The appointment of a fairly high-ranking officer as Chief Protector was intended to convey to the British government in particular that the state attached considerable importance to the administration of Aboriginal affairs.7 More significantly, it also represented a saving in salaries during a period of strict control over government expenditure. In 1909, largely as a matter of administrative expediency, the Departments of Aborigines and Fisheries were amalgamated. They already shared the same departmental head, both came under the umbrella of the Colonial Secretary, and both had considerable interest in the north of the state.

Gale's appointment meant a continuation of the practice of appointing mediocre and unimaginative administrators as Chief Protector of Aborigines. Gale had a poor record as an administrator and, like his predecessor, had no previous experience in the administration of Aboriginal affairs. However, he did have a reputation in the northwest as an expert on Aborigines on the basis of his practical experience as a pastoralist and government officer. This certainly played a part in his appointment, as Connolly's main concern was to deal with the situation of Aborigines in the north.
Gale was born in Geraldton in 1860 and was educated in England and at Bishop Hale's school (also Forrest's Alma Mater). During the 1880s he became a pastoralist in the Gascoyne district, but his enterprise was doomed by a series of dry seasons, and at the time of the first Pilbara gold strikes he dispensed with his pastoral interests and set out to search for gold. In 1893 Gale joined the public service as an Assistant Inspector of Stock for the Lands Department in Geraldton, and in 1897 he was transferred to the Fisheries Department, where he held the position of Inspector of Pearl Fisheries in the Shark Bay district until his appointment as Chief Inspector of Fisheries in 1899. He held this office jointly with that of Chief Protector of Aborigines from 1907 to August 1910 when the positions were separated, and thereafter he remained Chief Protector of Aborigines until his retirement in 1915.8

Gale's attitudes to Aborigines during his pioneering days were strongly influenced by the social situation in which he lived and his own pastoral interests. His evidence to the 1882 Fairbairn Inquiry into Aboriginal cattle-killing in the Gascoyne district provides a good insight into his views on Aborigines during his days as a pastoralist. He told the Inquiry that

...if the government shut their eyes for six months and let the settlers deal with the natives in their own way it would stop the depredations effectively.9

It is also possible that he was amongst those Gascoyne pastoralists criticised by the Reverend J.B. Gribble in 1886 for their harsh treatment of Aborigines.

Gale's public views had necessarily moderated by 1907, nevertheless as a member of the 1908 Royal Commission into extraordinary
allegations of cruelty and immorality made by a member of the Canning Exploration Party against other members of the expedition,* he exonerated the party of all charges, with the exception of the charge of immorality, for which there was "slight foundation".10 In his final report, Gale suggested that the allegations had been concocted and that Canning had been perfectly justified in acting as he had done to safeguard the purpose of the expedition and the members of the party.11 As Chief Protector, Gale showed that he was willing to stand up to pastoral interests although pastoralists generally fared well under his administration. While he opposed the introduction of a minimum wage for Aborigines in the pastoral industry, he nevertheless attempted to get pastoralists to contribute more to the upkeep of indigent Aborigines on their properties in the interests of Departmental economy. This formed part of his general campaign to reduce expenditure on relief. In 1909, in response to criticisms made in the Morning Herald by Arthur Harris, an Aboriginal from Busselton who had lived in camps in the Perth district from the turn of the century, that Aborigines were being denied rations under the new administration, Gale told the press that the Department

* The allegations, made by E.J. Blake, the cook on the expedition, included: forcing Aborigines to accompany the party against their will; taking Aboriginal valuables (including stores of sacred objects); chaining Aborigines by the neck; chaining them to trees with short lengths of chain; chaining them to camels when travelling; fastening Aborigines to water casks with hand-cuffs attached to their ankles; tying an Aboriginal to another with hand-cuffs fastened through a hole in the nasal septum; unnecessarily depriving Aborigines of their water supply by deepening and squaring water holes so that the young and elderly would be unable to reach the water and also causing animals to fall into the water holes thereby polluting the water; hunting Aboriginal women from horse-back, sometimes with rifles, for immoral purposes; using threats and bribes to induce Aboriginal men to direct their women to have sexual intercourse with certain members of the party (WA, 15/1/1908).
was not intended to function as a "charitable institution for able-bodied aborigines and half-castes" and that in future it would only assist those who were "unable to assist themselves".  

Gale was an inept administrator. His reports and submissions to his Minister left much to be desired* and in action he was impulsive and prone to seeking grand solutions which he subsequently found difficult to implement. Although Gale had influential friends in government (the former Colonial Secretary, Sir Walter Kingsmill, was a close friend of long-standing), he had many conflicts with his own Ministers. His relations with the practical and realistic Connolly, although initially amicable, deteriorated rapidly and they clashed over a range of matters including staffing, mission subsidies, wages in the pastoral industry and amendments to the 1905 Aborigines Act. In 1910, while Gale was on a tour of inspection in the north, Connolly separated the positions of Chief Protector and Chief Inspector of Fisheries on the grounds that Gale's additional duties in the north made it necessary to relieve him of the latter position.  

There was some truth in this statement, particularly as Gale's regular tours in the north meant that he was absent for long periods. However, the action was also related to their personal differences, and it served to increase tensions between them.

Despite these tensions, the period from 1908 to 1911 was an active one for Aboriginal affairs in the state. The focus of the administration was on the north, and several important projects, including the Lock Hospital scheme for the treatment of venereal

* For example, Connolly wrote in 1911 that much of the information contained in a report by Gale on mission subsidies was inaccurate and that the report was useless (AF/295/1928).
disease and the Department's first cattle station, were initiated there to deal with problems not addressed by the previous administration. However, the considerable success of the Department in getting government approval and funding for these projects was due largely to the energy and determination of Connolly.

Implementing the Act: Services for Aborigines

As has been discussed, the 1905 Act made no changes to the specified welfare duties of the Department, although it was required to provide for a broader range of persons of Aboriginal descent. During this period there was a widening gap between the quality of assistance provided for needy whites and Aborigines. Persons who came under the control of the Aborigines Department were denied the benefits of welfare measures such as the Old Age Pension and Maternity Allowance, introduced by the Federal government in 1908 and 1912 respectively.* Instead they had to rely on meagre hand-outs of rations and blankets. From 1909 there was a gradual tightening-up in the distribution of relief by the Department and a marked trend towards the centralisation of services for Aborigines in segregated institutionalised settings. The twin goals of expediency and economy dominated the welfare services provided by the Department and little

* "Aborigines" were specifically excluded from receiving old age and invalid pensions under Sections 16 and 21 of the 1907 Invalid and Old Age Pensions Act (No. 17 of 1907) respectively, while Aboriginal women were denied the Maternity Allowance under Section 6 (2) of the 1912 Maternity Allowance Act (No. 8 of 1912). The Aborigines Department adopted the principle that persons of part-Aboriginal descent who received assistance from the Department were to be automatically denied access to these Commonwealth benefits as well (AF/717/1915).
notice was taken of the inconvenience and, in some cases, the anguish that often followed for Aborigines.

(i) Relief Measures

From 1908 there was substantial reorganisation of the Department's relief measures. New procedures were introduced to improve efficiency and control over the issue of relief in an effort to keep expenditure at a minimum. From 1909 rations were to be purchased through local government contractors, and the whole system of issuing rations was placed more directly in the hands of the police. At the same time, strict controls were introduced over the issue of rations by the police as the Department suspected that police officers were abusing the system for their own gain. *

Under the new system the police were to issue ration vouchers to needy Aborigines, who then placed the voucher with the local contractor. After issuing the rations, the contractor completed the necessary order forms and forwarded them, together with the vouchers and a signed declaration to the effect that the rations had been issued to the person named on the voucher, to the nearest Resident Magistrate for certification. The approved forms were then sent to the District Police Office who was required to ascertain whether the rations had in fact been issued. Any irregularities were to be reported to the Chief Protector and anyone signing false

* This suspicion was confirmed after a couple of months of operation of the new system, when it was found that the greatest savings were being made in areas where police had previously been in charge of the distribution of rations. This was particularly evident at stations in the north of the state, and in the Roebourne district alone the Department saved almost £200 in the first months of the new system (AF/1263/1909).
**ABORIGINES DEPARTMENT.**

**No** 6901

18 May, 1910

To

Ration Coupon

Please issue in each of the undersigned named
11 lb. rations of

- 10 lbs. Flour
- Sugar 1/2 lb. per week
- 1 lb. Meat daily
- Tea 1/4 lb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Recipient</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None @ 60 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pregnant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signed:

[Signature]
declarations faced fines of up to £20. The police were also required to forward monthly lists of all persons receiving rations in their district to the Chief Protector. They were instructed by Gale that Aborigines were not to be placed on the permanent ration list without his approval and that temporary relief was to be issued for one week only. All "able-bodied" Aborigines on relief were to be instructed to find work immediately.\textsuperscript{15} Strict controls were also introduced over the issue of blankets and from 1909 the Department arranged to have all clothing manufactured at Fremantle Jail.\textsuperscript{*} The annual clothing issue consisted of a shirt and knee-length pants for men (valued at 7/3d.) and a blouse and skirt for women (valued at 9/-).\textsuperscript{16}

These new measures led to considerable savings. This can be seen, for example, by comparing the ration bill for 1906 when 837 Aborigines were rationed at a total cost of £8,533 with that for 1910 when 1,497 Aborigines cost the Department only £8,812.\textsuperscript{17} However, the new relief measures caused considerable inconvenience for Aborigines and brought them more directly under police control. Aborigines who had previously been issued rations by settlers in the farming districts were now obliged to collect rations from the police station in town and those without transport were forced to camp nearby. In some instances the police insisted that Aborigines camp near the town. In 1910 Davy and Polly Colarn were camped with Colarn's brother-in-law, Dicky Modder and his wife Janey on land owned by a Mr Chapman near Darlingup, on the Arthur River. They

\textsuperscript{*} This followed the precedent of the Charities Department, which had its clothing issue manufactured at Fremantle Jail.
Elderly Man in front of his camp, n.d.

Note blanket issued by Aborigines Department hanging on the line in the background.
were all elderly and in receipt of rations and Colarn hunted on land surrounding Chapman's farm for meat to supplement their diet. In the same year Colarn received a serious eye injury during a fight with Alec Bibarn, a man known to white settlers and Aborigines as "a dangerous man" who was said to have committed several murders which could not be proved against him. * As a result of this injury Colarn was no longer able to hunt. The local police blamed the fight on alcohol and, in an effort to stamp out the further consumption of alcohol in the district, insisted that the four elderly people move to Kojonup to be rationed there, despite the Aborigines' objections that they did not want to leave their "hunting ground". 18

The Department continued to rely heavily on the cooperation of the Medical Department in providing for Aboriginal health. However, hospital authorities in country towns showed a growing reluctance

* Alec Bibarn is an important figure in Nyungar folklore. Stories are still told of his supernatural powers and of the many tribal murders he was alleged to have committed. Some examples of these stories can be found in the oral histories in Appendix I. There was certainly some truth to the stories. In 1901 the Bridgetown police were searching for Bibarn in relation to a charge of having murdered one of his wives, Julia Correll. He was described as being fifty years of age, 5'9" of stout build and wearing blood-stained moleskin trousers. It was not recorded whether he was apprehended. In 1913 the Busselton police reported that he was on his way from Bridgetown with a group of men to avenge an "old feudal matter". Some time after this Bibarn was sent to the Carrolup Native Settlement under Ministerial warrant. He attempted unsuccessfully to escape from there in 1922 and was then sent to Moore River Native Settlement (Bridgetown Police Station Occurrence Book, 28/9/1899 - 25/6/1902; Busselton Police Station Occurrence Book, 6/11/1912 - 20/3/1914; A/393/1927). Stories are still told by Nyungars of how he fooled guards there while attempting to escape by turning himself into an anthill. To Nyungars, Alec Bibarn represents one of the last truly traditional powerful Aboriginal men in the south, and as such is regarded generally as a figure of respect and fear.
to admit Aboriginal patients, and in 1909 Gale circularised all
government-assisted hospitals to remind them that they were required
by law to provide free medical attention to unemployed Aborigines,
in return for the payment of the subsidy.

(ii) Segregated Facilities for Aborigines

Under Connolly’s ministry, several important projects were
initiated in the north to deal with problems left outstanding by
the previous administration. These projects provided for the care
of Aborigines in isolation from the white community and they
represented the Department’s first major steps towards a policy of
segregation of Aborigines. No new projects were undertaken in the
south. This was not simply a matter of Departmental policy, although
one journalist wrote in 1909 that the Department did not seem to
know what to do with the Aborigines in the south. Rather, it
reflected the differing state of affairs in the two areas. While
the Department was being lobbied by powerful white interests to deal
with problems in the north, there were few complaints about Aborigines
in the south, apart from sporadic objections to Aboriginal camps
in the larger coastal towns, and occasional expressions of concern
about part-Aboriginal children growing up in “black camps”. Neverthe-
less, the limited action taken by the Department in the south also
indicated a trend towards segregation. This took the form of the
gazetting of a small number of Aboriginal camping reserves and new
ideas about the role of the children’s missions.

In 1908, following continued concern about the spread of venereal
disease in the north, the Department (in cooperation with the Medical
Department) established two Lock Hospitals on Dorre and Bernier
Islands off the Carnarvon coast for the treatment of Aborigines
suffering from venereal disease. Two years later, after complaints from pastoralists in the Kimberley about Aboriginal killing of stock, and in an attempt to reduce the numbers of Aborigines imprisoned for cattle killing in the north, the Department established its first

* The Lock Hospital Scheme derived from the practice introduced in England (1864), Tasmania (1879) and various British colonies, of retaining women suffering from venereal disease in special isolation hospitals until a cure had been effected (Jebb, 1982). Dorre and Bernier Islands were chosen as suitable sites for such hospitals in Western Australia as they were far enough off the coast to ensure the total isolation of Aborigina. patients from the white community and the existence of two islands meant that men and women could be kept strictly separated. Despite the failure of earlier state governments to introduce legislation to force white women to undergo treatment for venereal disease (ibid.) no objections were raised by politicians or the general public to the announcement of the establishment of Lock Hospitals for Aborigines. In fact the scheme was greeted with general approval. In 1908 police and local protectors throughout the state were instructed to examine local Aboriginal adults for symptoms of the disease and to forward the names of those requiring treatment to the Department (AF/2463/1908). These people were then rounded up and sent to the islands. After 1908 a doctor's certificate was considered sufficient authority for a police constable to arrange for an Aboriginal to be sent to the Lock Hospitals without prior consultation with the Aborigines Department. In fact, this procedure was not legally valid under the Aborigines Act without a Ministerial warrant. The Department also had no legal power to force Aborigines to undergo medical examination or treatment. These facts were simply overlooked by the Department. In 1909 Regulations were passed for the operation of the Lock Hospitals. These stipulated the duties, rules and conditions of employment for the following members of staff: the Superintendent, Medical Officer-in-Charge, Nurse-in-Charge, Senior Nurse and other Nurses, Chief and Senior Orderlies, and other Orderlies (GG, 2/7/1909). This presented an image of a typical hospital setting, although the reality was in fact quite different. It appears that there were some 1,100 admissions to the Lock Hospitals from 1908 until their closure in 1917 (Jebb, 1982). The Aborigines came largely from the north and the goldfields, and some were possibly sent from the south. The medical treatment provided at the hospitals was minimal and often experimental in nature. It was frequently unsuccessful and there were many deaths. The living conditions on the islands were reported to be horrendous (see, for example, Bates, 1939).
cattle station, Moola Bulla, in the East Kimberley.* This was planned as a government-run, self-supporting enterprise where Aborigines could be provided with food instead of helping themselves to cattle on the surrounding stations. It was also intended to exert a civilising influence by providing education and training for young Aborigines. In practice it functioned largely as a feeding depot.

* In 1908 the Pastoralists Association sent a deputation to the Colonial Secretary requesting that feeding depots be established in the East and West Kimberley to reduce cattle killing by Aborigines. The government was sympathetic to their proposal as it was attempting to reduce the number of Aborigines imprisoned for this offence in the interests of economy. Despite Roth's searing criticisms of the system of justice in the north, which involved the mass imprisonment of Aborigines for cattle killing, arrests and the abuse of Aboriginal prisoners while under arrest had continued, and in fact the number of convictions for cattle killing had increased (Biskup, 1973). The government had grown increasingly alarmed at the cost of transporting Aborigines to the Rottnest Island Prison and maintaining them there, and in 1910 Rottnest was closed down. At the same time, increasing numbers of Aborigines were being kept in prisons in the north where the cost of their upkeep was offset by their work on prison gangs, and much of the public works in the towns of Roebourne, Broome and Derby were done by Aboriginal prisoners. However, the scale of the local works projects was progressively cut down during the first decade of this century, leaving the Aboriginal prisoners sitting idly in the prisons where they represented an increasing financial burden on the state. In his 1908 Annual Report, Gale had suggested the gazetting of Aboriginal reserves in each tribal district in the north as a solution to the problem. This would involve splitting up some of the larger pastoral stations and he anticipated strong opposition and protest from the squatters in the north (AR/1908). In the same year he announced that the Department intended opening mission stations in the Kimberleys where able-bodied Aborigines could be taught to become "useful workers" and where the destitute could be provided for. In 1909 Connolly approved the establishment of a self-supporting institution for the relief of Aborigines in the East Kimberley, and in 1910 a cattle station of over a million acres was gazetted as an Aboriginal reserve under the name of Moola Bulla, a name chosen by Daisy Bates meaning "plenty tucker" (Biskup, 1973).
and place of detention for Aborigines in the north.* The establish-
ment of Moola Bulla marked the end of the practice of pacification
of Aborigines through imprisonment which had been central to the
official policy of colonising Aborigines in the north from the early
days of white occupation of the area. Nevertheless, the imprisonment
of Aborigines continued in the north and prisons became one of a number
of government-run institutions providing for the control of Aborigines
in the area and their forced segregation from the wider community.
Connolly strongly supported the concept of large hunting reserves
in the north where tribal Aborigines could be isolated from the
influence of white society (as recommended in the Roth Report) and
in 1911 succeeded in persuading his cabinet colleagues to approve
the creation of a four million acre reserve, Warndoc, on the western
shores of the Cambridge Gulf in the East Kimberley.**

Each of these projects was based on a belief in the value of
the enforced social isolation of Aborigines, for their own "better
protection and care" and, more importantly, in the interests of the
white community. The incarceration of Aborigines at Dorre and Bernier

* The establishment of Moola Bulla was successful in reducing the
number of convictions for cattle stealing and the overall number
of Aborigines in prison fell accordingly.(Bishop,1973) It also proved
more economical than imprisonment: it had cost a little over twice
the annual expenditure on Aboriginal prisoners to establish and
it was generally believed that it would make a profit for the
Department in the future. In 1911 a secondary feeding depot was
established at Violet Valley near Turkey Creek. However, the
Aborigines refused to stay at Moola Bulla: after being brought
in by the police, they would simply leave and return to their own
country. Even local Aborigines refused to remain there. The train-
ing function of Moola Bulla was never realised, and its major
function was that of a buffer serving the interests of the Kimberley
pastoralists (ibid.).

** In the same year Connolly succeeded in persuading Parliament to
remove the 2,000 acre limitation on the size of Aboriginal reserves
from the 1905 Act.
Islands was considered the most efficient way of limiting the spread of venereal disease amongst both the white and Aboriginal community in the north. At Moola Bulla, Aborigines who were impeding the economic progress of the pastoralists through their attacks on cattle were to be kept isolated from the stations and encouraged to contribute to their own keep, while their children were to be trained to become domestic servants and stockmen for local employers. Aborigines at Marndoc were to remain permanently isolated from the outside world. This policy was predicated on the belief that the Aborigines would follow the assumed fate of those in the south and eventually disappear.

The terrible living conditions and inferior medical treatment at the Lock Hospitals exemplified the intolerable conditions which the Department was prepared to allow in its institutions. The Department also showed in the Lock Hospital scheme that it was prepared to contravene the 1905 Act to suit its own purposes. This was evident in the practice of sending Aborigines to the islands without ministerial warrants as required under the 1905 Act and forcing them to undergo treatment without any legal power to do so. These were ominous signs in a Department that was moving increasingly towards state-run institutions for Aborigines.

In the south the Department responded to complaints about Aboriginal camps from white residents in the larger coastal towns by establishing small isolated camping reserves where the Aborigines could be kept together, away from the white community, and under the eye of the Department and the local police. These complaints reflected wider socio-economic changes in the south which will be discussed in the following chapter. Whites increasingly settled in parts of the towns which had formerly been open camping areas for Aborigines.
The new settlers were unfamiliar with the paternalistic relationships which existed between many of the whites and Aborigines in the towns, and they objected to the presence of the Aborigines. Consequently there were fewer places for Aborigines to camp and as available sites became over-crowded and jobs harder to find, living conditions in the camps deteriorated. Aborigines' responses to these living conditions and to the attitudes of the new settlers were often manifested in excessive drinking and violence.

In 1906 the Department ordered Aborigines camping near Bunbury to move to a new camp two miles from town following complaints that sailors and local white men were supplying the Aborigines with alcohol and having sexual contact with the women.\(^{20}\) From 1908 there were increasing complaints about Aboriginal camps in the Perth metropolitan area. Gale did not share Prinsep's interest in Aborigines camped around Perth, and in that year he transferred administrative responsibility for Welshpool Reserve to the Australian Inland Mission (AIM), a non-denominational missionary society founded in New South Wales in 1905, with the promise of an annual subsidy of £250.\(^{21}\) By this stage the Reserve was merely a ration depot consisting of old tin huts inhabited by a floating population of Aborigines. The missionaries began their work in May, but by July the Reserve was empty and they were obliged to terminate their work. The Department reported that the Aborigines moved off after they were told by the missionaries that they would have to work to support themselves.\(^{22}\) The ration lists, however, indicate that most people at the Reserve were physically incapable of work and their movement off the Reserve camp probably reflected their resentment at the missionaries' intrusion in their camp.
Most Aborigines from the Welshpool Reserve moved to camps in West Guildford and Eden Hill on the outskirts of Perth. However, this led to a spate of complaints from local residents to the police of immorality and drunkenness in the camps. Aborigines at West Guildford were ordered to move by the local council under the Health Regulations. They moved to the nearby Success Hill recreation reserve but again there were complaints from local white residents and the Town Clerk. The Department was obliged to take action, and in 1910 a reserve of 48 acres was declared at Guildford.* However, the Aborigines refused to stay there: the reserve was adjacent to the Guildford cemetery and too far from town. They had no transport and were unable to carry their supplies out to the reserve or to get to their places of employment. They continued to camp where they could: some drifted back to Welshpool while others moved to camps on private land in the neighbouring areas of Lockridge, Beechboro and Caversham.23

In 1912 there were complaints about Aborigines camping on private land at the back of Butler's Swamp in the Perth suburb of Claremont. A small group camped there on a regular basis but during the Royal Show numbers increased dramatically. In the same year the District Surveyor requested that land at the bottom on the showground reserve be set aside for the use of Aborigines and an Aboriginal, Tommy Pimber, requested a ten acre reserve nearby. However the Claremont Council refused to cooperate and the Department allowed the matter to lapse.24

Meanwhile the Busselton police had approached the Department about a town reserve for local Aborigines. They stated that there had been an increase in the consumption of alcohol amongst the

* See Appendix II for further details on this reserve.
Aboriginal Camp, Busselton, n.d.
Aborigines and if they were forced to camp together on a reserve on the edge of town the police would be able to control their entry to town and thereby their access to alcohol. At that stage they were living in a variety of places and the police could not control them. Some lived on private property outside the town boundary, one family lived in a rented house in town, another owned a block of land, and some women were married to white men and camped on their land. Others passed backwards and forwards between the town and the bush. Although the Department approved the proposal, it was rejected by the Busselton Council and the matter was dropped.

This typified the Department's response to opposition from local white organisations: whenever there was a conflict between Aboriginal and white interests in relation to camping reserves the Department tended to back down in the interests of appeasing the whites.

The trend towards segregation reflected in the administrative behaviour of the Department was also expressed in new ideas about the role of the children's missions in the south. The Department's proposals were essentially retrograde and reflected the growing belief that persons of Aboriginal descent were inherently incapable of making their own way in the wider community, and the Department's compliance with increasing racism in the community. Gale and Connolly were critical of the mission model promoted under Prinsep's regime, where children were educated to a certain age and then sent out into the community to work. In their opinion, the missions had failed to produce individuals who could lead independent and successful lives away from the "guiding influence" of the missions. Instead, the young people succumbed to the "cry of the bush", drifting back to their "native habits" and living a "mischievous and indolent life". Then in their old age they turned to the Department for support.
However, their real difficulties lay in their contacts with whites. They were not accepted by the wider community and they often led "lonely and miserable" lives on the fringes of white society. In addition, they were susceptible to abuse and "moral dangers", often with "unfortunate results" especially for the young women. As an alternative, Gale and Connolly advocated the establishment of mission settlements which combined ideas developed by Salvado at New Norcia with current views on the value of segregating Aborigines from the white community "for their own good", and of encouraging Aborigines to contribute more to their own maintenance rather than relying on the state to provide for them.27

Connolly and Gale recommended that mission authorities retain control over

...the welfare of those under their charge, not only as boys and girls, but in future years when both sexes have grown into that stage of life when it is only natural and desirable that they should be mated together.28

These couples would provide the basis of a permanent segregated mission community. The missions should endeavour to obtain sufficient areas of farming land away from the towns where the young people could be trained in suitable industrial* and agricultural work. This would enable them to contribute to the upkeep of the missions and would provide an incentive to find regular employment on the mission settlements or to work their own farming blocks on mission land. It was envisaged that the missions would thus become self-supporting and that the Department would thereby be relieved of the cost of supporting large numbers of Aborigines.

* 'Industrial' in this sense referred to small cottage industries.
The proposal received a mixed reception from mission authorities. The Benedictines at New Norcia showed little interest in the scheme. As will be discussed in the following chapter, this mission was moving in another direction: the number of adults living there had declined dramatically from the turn of the century and children were being cared for in the mission "orphanages".* Although they were encouraged to marry amongst themselves on reaching maturity, few incentives were offered to them to remain at the mission as adults. The children's training was already strongly vocationally oriented and through their work around the mission they made a substantial contribution to their livelihood. Charlie Sandstone was sent to New Norcia in 1909 and he recalls that the children and young people worked hard helping with the mission's various farming activities and doing chores around the Aboriginal "orphanages" and the white children's colleges. ** As a young boy Charlie Sandstone used to

...help in the baker's shop and help carry the bread up to the orphanages...I had a horse and cart, belonged to the mission. Cart all the groceries and bread up to the orphanages and the colleges. Up to Ildephonsus College with a big drum of milk and then the girls orphanage and then Saint Gertrudes College - the white girls.***

The Aboriginal girls worked at the Colleges doing the cleaning and washing, ironing and mending for the white children. They also took orders for embroidered table linen from the outside community as well as sewing clothes for themselves and the boys from the orphanage.

* Strictly speaking, they were not orphanages as the parents of most of the children living there were still alive. However, they were run along the same lines as institutions providing for orphaned children and for all intents and purposes the children were treated as if they were orphans.

** In 1908 New Norcia took on the education of white children of prominent Catholic families with the establishment of St. Gertrude's College for Girls in that year. The St. Ildephonsus College for Boys was opened in 1913.
The Anglican Church responded warmly to the new proposal. In 1911 the Swan Native and Half-Caste Home (SNHC) authorities announced that industrial training would be added to the domestic and farm work already being done at the mission. At the same time the Anglican Diocesan Board of Missions appointed a Board to look into the possibility of making the mission into a self-supporting community and it recommended that a mission be established in the southern agricultural districts. Ellensbrook was too small a concern to be considered and anyway it was established on privately owned land. The SNHC Home was situated in the Perth suburb of Midland on a relatively small area of land which could not enable it to become self-supporting, and as all the mission buildings had been condemned in 1908 following an outbreak of tuberculosis there would have been no real loss in moving to another area and establishing new buildings and facilities. The Board's decision was endorsed at the Conference of the Eastern Diocese in Northam in May 1911 and strong support expressed for the total segregation of Aborigines. Canon Groser of Beverley told the Conference that

...the only hope for the natives lay in segregation. The Indians were saved by the government from destruction by being segregated from whites absolutely. They had become educated and had become not only farmers but citizens of the United States.32

The Reverend A. Cravan of Toodyay advised his colleagues to "let them give the natives a settlement where they could develop their own national, individual and racial characteristics".33

The other children's mission in the south was the Dulhi Gunyah Orphanage* established in 1909 by the Reverend E.J. Telfer of the

* The term 'orphanage' is a misnomer, for the same reasons indicated earlier.
Australian Aborigines Mission (AAM), an inter-denominational missionary society founded in New South Wales in 1893.* The orphanage was run along similar lines to the SNHC Home and was intended to concentrate on the training of young women for domestic work. Originally situated in a house in East Perth, it was moved to a bungalow on a twelve acre block in Victoria Park in 1911. The orphanage relied heavily on public donations and gifts and appears to have received little financial assistance from AAM authorities in the Eastern States who directed their missionaries to "rely on God" to supply their needs rather than on any "human organisation".34 Funding from the Department was minimal. Connolly refused to subsidise the orphanage at the same rate as the other missions on the grounds that it was too close to Perth and, situated on a small block of land, it had no hope of becoming self-supporting. It received a daily per capita

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* Known originally as the Christian Endeavour Movement, the society began its work with Aborigines in 1894 when a mission home was established at the Aboriginal camp at La Perouse in Sydney. In 1899, after the society decided to extend its operations to camps throughout the state, its name was changed to the New South Wales Aborigines Mission (Biskup, 1973). In 1907 the society's name was changed to the Australian Aborigines Mission (AAM), reflecting the missionaries' intentions to take up work in other states, including Western Australia. Telfer was to lead the missionary advance in the west and he arrived in Albany in 1907, accompanied by an Aboriginal, Peter Wandy. Wandy was originally from the Leonora district. He had been kidnapped by a party of camel drivers when he was a young boy. They forced him to work like "a black slave" until, having no further need of him, they abandoned him at Coolgardie. He was offered employment under good conditions in New South Wales by a visitor to the area, but on arriving in the east he found that his employer was cruel and refused to pay him wages. Wandy managed to get away to Sydney and the police there instructed him to move to the camp at La Perouse. Converted to Christianity, Wandy insisted on accompanying Telfer to Western Australia to help him "spread the word". Telfer and Wandy travelled by bicycle from Albany to Perth stopping on the way to preach to Aborigines at the Katanning camp. In Perth Wandy assisted Telfer in raising funds for the orphanage by playing the gum leaf at concerts (Telfer, 1939). However, he seems to have left Telfer soon after, suggesting that his enthusiasm to accompany Telfer back to Western Australia may have been motivated more by the desire to return to his home than by an urge to evangelise.
grant of eight pence for each child sent in by the Department but in 1910 only four of the sixteen children living there were subsidised by the government. In their precarious financial situation the AAM authorities were keen to try any new ideas which could make the orphanage more productive and between 1911 and 1914 they introduced training in the making of fibre bags, cabbage tree hats, raffia work, sewing and knitting. Goods produced were sold locally. In 1912 the AAM opened a preaching station at Katanning and in the following year the mission announced its intention to establish a "colony" in the country where young Aborigines could settle and earn a livelihood.

Despite these plans, little came of the programme proposed by Connolly and Gale. The missions continued to focus their attention on domestic and farm work (with the exception of Dulhi Gunyah which offered no training in agricultural work) and formal education of the children remained minimal. The children continued to enter

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* In 1913 the Travelling Inspector reported that children at the SNHC Home did 3½ hours of school work a day and they followed the state curriculum and were regularly inspected by the Inspector for Schools. The rest of their time was spent on domestic, gardening and dairying work at the mission (AF/127/13). Girls at New Norcia did three hours of school work a day. They did not follow the state curriculum but were taught reading, writing, arithmetic and geography. Out of school hours they did sewing, cooking, washing, ironing and other domestic duties. From the age of fourteen they began to assist in picking olives and making olive oil. Some were sent out to service while others remained at the orphanage until they married and then moved to the mission cottages. The boys did only one or two hours of school a day. They did farm work around the mission and were also taught trades such as saddle making and boot repairing. At the age of fourteen they left school and began to work full-time at the mission. They received "pocket money" until they turned eighteen and then were paid wages. Some moved to the monastery to live until they married but most eventually moved off the mission (AF/213/1913). From 1913 children at Dulhi Gunyah followed the state curriculum under a teacher approved by the Education Department. However the major emphasis of the orphanage was on domestic work (AF/269/1915). The few children at Ellensbrook received little education. Two boys at the home told the Department in 1911 that they were only taught a little reading and writing on Sunday nights during winter (AF/627/1911).
the wider community to work in unskilled occupations. No savings were made in mission expenditure and the Department continued to subsidise the missions at the same rates. These were considerably lower than for institutions providing for white children.* The concept of self-supporting agricultural mission settlements also failed to eventuate. The government was not willing to provide any extra funding to the missions to enable them to develop in this way and the Lands Department was not in favour of granting large areas of land in agricultural districts for this purpose.** The missions continued to operate as training institutions for children who were subsequently sent out to white employers. However the proposal did have some impact: Gale began to advocate the establishment of agricultural settlements for Aborigines as a solution to increasing demands from white residents in the south to remove Aborigines from the town camps. Thus the proposal, originally intended to help Aborigines, came to placate the white community at their expense.

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* Institutions for white children received weekly per capita grants of between 7/- and 10/- per child while the Aboriginal children's missions received between 4/7d and 5/10d a week. The annual grant to New Norcia was considerably less. These levels were set by Prinsep in 1906 in response to orders to cut back in departmental expenditure. The differential treatment of New Norcia prompted objections from the Catholic Church and in 1909 Connolly instructed Gale to devise a system of subsidies which would place all missions on an equal footing without increasing the overall mission grant. However, Gale's subsequent report presented to Connolly three years later contained no recommendations apart from the suggestion that the subsidy to New Norcia be withdrawn altogether as it was economically self-supporting. Connolly rejected this proposal and reminded Gale that the Department relied on the cooperation of New Norcia in carrying out its duty of providing for the care and education of Aboriginal children and that as long as this continued the mission deserved to be treated fairly (A/295/1928).

** In 1909 Gale requested the Under Secretary of the Lands Department to set aside ten blocks of one hundred and fifty acres in each agricultural district for the use of mission couples. However, his request was met with a curt refusal (AF/161/1909).
(iii) Removal of Children to Missions

Prinsep made little use of his powers as legal guardian of children of Aborigines to remove them to missions, despite his previous strong interest in this area and public criticisms of his failure to act made by F. Lyon Weiss of the Aborigines Amelioration Movement.* This was due largely to the lack of funding to pay for the costs of transporting the children to the missions and maintaining them there. In addition, a provision in the 1905 Act intended to reduce the mission bill by forcing fathers of part-Aboriginal children to maintain their children in missions had proved unworkable.** However, from 1909 the Department began to play a more active role in this area and steps were taken to expedite the removal of part-Aboriginal children in particular to missions. Nevertheless, the overall number of children in missions in the south fell during this period, from 133 in 1906 to 97 in 1910, reflecting the growing

* The Aborigines Amelioration Movement was founded in Perth following the publication of the 1905 Roth Report. It was intended to act as a watchdog over the actions of the government in relation to Aborigines. The membership of the Movement is not known, however, it appears to have been small and lacking in influence. Its activities were also limited. In 1906 and 1907 Mr Weiss, calling himself the Public Protector of Aborigines, criticised Prinsep in letters to the press and the Department for his failure to remove Aboriginal children to missions (A/17/1907). In 1908 he also publicly expressed his objections to the composition of the Royal Commission into the Canning Exploratory Party in an interjection during the hearings of the Royal Commission and was subsequently forcibly ejected from the room. The Movement disintegrated in the same year (WA 16/1/1908).

** In 1906 the Department shelved its plans to sue a Mandurah man for maintenance of his "half-caste" child after it was advised that under the 1905 Act the oath of the Aboriginal mother was not sufficient proof of paternity (A/976/1906).
Southwest Aboriginal Family, n.d.
unwillingness of the children's parents and guardians to voluntarily send their children to missions to be educated. This in turn reflected the growing controls over children once they were placed in missions. At New Norcia, for example, families that shifted from the mission to work in the surrounding district often left their children behind to be educated. However, they found that they were frequently denied access to their children and some families who asked to take their children on holidays were told that their children would not be allowed to return if they did so. The parents strongly resented this and a number of families simply withdrew their children from the mission altogether.

Prior to 1909 local protectors and police were required to consult with the Aborigines Department before removing children from their families and sending them to missions. Regulations introduced in 1909 authorised any Justice of the Peace, protector or police officer to send any "half-caste" child under the age of eight to an industrial home, institution for Aborigines or mission without prior consultation with the Chief Protector. This served to expedite the removal of the children. At the same time it represented a gross interference in Aboriginal family life and it led to the break-up of many families. This differed markedly from the 1907 State Children's Act which was designed to care for needy children without undue interference in family relationships.* Charlie Sandstone was

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* The 1874 Industrial Schools Act was repealed in 1907 and replaced by the 1907 State Children's Act. This Act created the State Children's Department and it aimed to provide for the care of 'waifs' and juvenile offenders without removing the responsibility of parents to their children or disrupting family ties (Battye, 1912). This contrasted strongly with the aims of the 1905 Aborigines Act in relation to children of Aborigines.
removed from his family by the police in 1909 and sent to New Norcia:

The police came around and they sent a mob of us to New Norcia. Constable Hunter, he was up there at Sandstone, he got me and put me on the train and my sister Julia and another girl. I was sent to Mogumber station and then we were sent by horse and sulky to New Norcia. Well I was sent down there and I cried there. First they sent me to the girls orphanage. Couple of days I stayed there and then Brother Louis and the older boys came over and they carried me over to the boys orphanage when everything was dark. When I got up in the morning I looked around and I didn't know, I was crying for my sister. And then I got playing and I forgot all about it. They gave me my name there. They were asking Constable Hunter about me and he said "I brought him down from Sandstone... They call him Charlie so we'll call him Charlie Sandstone". And that's how I got my name. ...I found out later my proper name is O'Brien.

Parents whose children were taken from them were left heartbroken. A woman from the Bremer Ray district told the Department in 1911 that she could not understand why her four children had been taken away by the police, and that the "great cry" of her elderly husband was to see the girls again before he died. Some parents who were aware of their rights under the 1905 Act demanded that their children be returned to them and in instances where they could show that they were able to provide for their children the Department was legally obliged to authorise the return of the children. However, as will be discussed later, the Department took steps in 1911 to increase its control over part-Aboriginal children.

The Department at this time also refused to maintain orphaned or needy children outside of the missions. Ration lists sent in by the police were regularly inspected for names of children and their parents or guardians were instructed to send their children to the missions. The children's families often objected to this.
One elderly woman from the Bremer Bay district took to the bush with her grandchildren to avoid losing custody of them, while a man working in the Kellerberrin district whose wife had recently died of tuberculosis told the police that he "would not hear" of his children being taken from him. The police reported that the children were being well cared for by their father and the Department consequently acquiesced. There were in fact isolated cases where the children's relatives sent them in to the missions, sometimes earning themselves the undying anger of the children themselves. A woman who was sent with her sisters to Dulhi Gunyah Orphanage by her uncle described him as a

...busyboby...[he] would find things out and then go off and report yer, he was that sort of bloke. Nobody didn't like him. All my sisters they hated my uncle for doing that to us. But we couldn't stay with our father because there was no one to look after us.

Many parents in the south gained the impression that they could avoid losing their children by enrolling them at local state schools. Ironically, the increasing enrolment of Aboriginal children in schools from this time was to be a major factor in the racial tension which developed in the south during the years before World War I.

Implementing the Act: Restrictions on Personal Liberties

The 'protective' measures contained in the 1905 Act were only partially enforced in the south between 1906 and 1911. This reflected both the concerns of the Department and problems inherent in the administrative system. Prinsep, in keeping with his earlier concerns, was largely interested in limiting miscegenation, access to alcohol and the presence of Aborigines in towns. Gale maintained Prinsep's
Court Room Scene, n.d.
stance, albeit in a less obsessive manner, and also sought to introduce controls over the employment of Aborigines and their property. However, as long as the situation in the south remained quiet, neither Prinsep nor Gale was prepared to take any major action. As has been shown, the Department had little control over how the Act was implemented at the local level. It was largely the police, often acting under the influence of the local white community, who determined this. They contented themselves with restricting Aborigines' access to alcohol, their presence around the towns, miscegenation and the Aborigines' use of guns. They showed very little interest in regulating employment.

Nevertheless, even the partial implementation of the Act brought increasing hardships for Aborigines in the south. It quickly became apparent that the Act was being implemented repressively at the local level and that white rather than Aboriginal interests were being protected. The police and the local courts frequently overlooked the complexities of the legal definitions of "Aboriginal native" and "half-caste" and the respective restrictions on their behaviour. As a result, persons of varying degrees of Aboriginal descent were often treated identically. The local courts evidenced a pronounced leniency towards whites charged under the Act and in some cases its provisions were interpreted to exonerate white defendants. Meanwhile, Aborigines faced the prejudices of the local courts and they frequently received harsh punishments. Amendments to the 1905 Act in 1911 attempted to deal with some of these inequalities and to increase the efficacy of the legislation in fulfilling its original aims. In fact, however, it served to further reduce the rights of Aborigines in the state. Aborigines in the south were quick to protest against the increasing infringements on their personal liberties but their protests were in vain.
(i) **Alcohol and Entry to Towns**

As has been indicated, the police had enforced the prohibition on the supply of alcohol to Aborigines from 1880 and to "half-castes" who associated with Aborigines from 1902. The 1905 Act duplicated these restrictions and extended the prohibition to "half-castes" who lived a European lifestyle as well. This method of controlling access to alcohol by penalising the supplier had already proven difficult to enforce. To avoid police detection, Aborigines and whites had devised strategies such as hiding alcohol and arranging clandestine meetings, and lookouts were frequently appointed to keep an eye on the whereabouts of the police. Cliff Humphries, an Aboriginal from the Kellerberrin district, recalls one way that people would approach a supplier

...a wadjala [white] fellow going to town and he's a good old cobber of this Nyungar bloke, well the Nyungar might say "Fetch me a bottle". Other old bloke knew exactly what he wanted, he wanted whisky, see.

As a result of these strategems the police seldom caught people in the act of supplying and it was more often the case that Aborigines were found in possession of alcohol. They generally refused to give the names of suppliers to the police, despite reported allegations that police bashed Aborigines in an attempt to get names. In the rare instances where the police managed to lay charges of supplying against whites, the local justices rarely imposed more than a minimum fine and hence the work of the police was in vain. In frustration the police resorted over the years to charging Aborigines with related offences (illegal possession, drunkenness, drunk and disorderly) and to strictly controlling the Aborigines' presence around the towns and their contact with whites. The prohibition
Pub Scene, n.d.
on the supply of alcohol to Aborigines in the 1905 Act and instructions to the police in 1907 to rigidly enforce this provision served to accelerate this trend.

The resulting difficulties associated with obtaining alcohol and escaping detection encouraged the development of drinking patterns amongst Aborigines involving the rapid consumption of alcohol, usually on drinking sprees during occasional visits to town. Such behaviour rarely went undetected by the police. Miss E. Healey, whose father was stationed at Toodyay Police Station between 1902 and 1912, recalls that Aborigines who came into town from the surrounding farms for drinking sprees invariably ended up in the "guest house" (the Aborigines' name for the local prison) on charges of drunkenness and, depending on how they behaved when arrested, they could be sentenced to up to three months' imprisonment or more.\(^47\)

The records also show harsh punishments for illegal possession of alcohol; one man was sentenced by the Toodyay Court to three months at Rottnest for having wine in his possession.\(^48\) The manner in which cases involving Aborigines were conducted frequently left much to be desired. In 1913 a part-Aboriginal, W. Shaw, appealed against the decision by a Mullewa magistrate who had fined him for supplying alcohol to Aborigines on the legal grounds that the Aboriginal witnesses had not been properly sworn but had simply been told to "tell the truth or go to jail". Not surprisingly the magistrate failed to record his directions to the witnesses and Shaw's appeal was dismissed due to lack of evidence.\(^49\) Magistrates and local justices also made use of a clause in the Justices Act which enabled them to impose minimum fines for first offences so that whites charged with supplying alcohol were fined far less than the maximum sum of £20 stipulated in the 1905 Act. This further reduced the efficacy of
the prohibition. In 1909 Gale circularised all police instructing them to draw the attention of the local courts to the Crown Solicitor's ruling that this practice was invalid. However this had little effect.

The police welcomed the 1905 extension of the alcohol prohibition to all "half-castes" whom they regarded as the major suppliers of alcohol to Aborigines. As in 1902 those "half-castes" who had previously not been affected by such provisions were quick to voice their protests. In 1906 Edwin Turner, an educated part-Aboriginal who had four hundred acres of land under conditional purchase near Bridgetown, wrote to the Attorney General complaining that on one of his regular visits to town the police had warned the local publican that he would be charged under the Aborigines Act if he served Turner a drink. Turner stated that he voted in the local council and roads board elections and wished to "emphatically appeal against...a great act of injustice to myself and others in a similar position". Prinsep sympathised with his objections and Turner was granted an exemption and an official apology. However this was exceptional, particularly after Prinsep's retirement.

The police saw the restriction on the entry of Aborigines to towns as an important way of enforcing the prohibition on alcohol and Police and Aborigines Department records indicate an increase in controls on the entry of Aborigines to towns from 1906.* In that year, following complaints about the behaviour of Aborigines in Guildford, the local police recommended to the Department that they should be refused entry to the town. This concurred with the policy of the Department and Prinsep fully supported the recommendation.52

* Controls over the entry of Aborigines to towns were first introduced in Western Australia in the 1840s. The clause in the 1905 Act was taken directly from the 1886 Aborigines Protection Act.
The Aborigines did not always meekly follow the orders of the police. It was an offence to refuse to obey instructions to leave town and such opposition frequently led to prison sentences. One man refused to leave Bunbury and when the order was repeated told the police that he would go when he liked. He was subsequently arrested along with his two companions but managed to break away, shouting that "no bloody policeman would lock [him] up". Taking off his coat he challenged the constable to a fight. After hitting the constable he ran to the front of a hotel and, picking up some bricks, he challenged anyone to try to take him. The constable and some onlookers rushed him but he managed to elude them until, with the aid of another policeman, he was finally captured. He was charged in Bunbury Court with three offences: refusing to leave town; breaking away from custody; and assaulting a police officer. He refused to say anything in his defence and was sentenced to three months' hard labour at Fremantle Prison.53

Nevertheless, in 1909 the Police and Aborigines Departments clashed over the enforcement of the provision on entry to towns. It was the first of many such clashes. In 1907 the Aborigines Department had instructed police to rigidly enforce this provision. However in 1909, in an effort to reduce the number of Aboriginal prisoners in the north, the Police Commissioner ordered that police were not to charge Aborigines for loitering around towns. Gale demanded that the Commissioner countermand his order, particularly in relation to towns in the south, and to see that in future his officers rigidly enforced the provision.54 Such clashes did little to promote amicable relations between the Departments.
(ii) **Miscegenation**

The 1905 Act was intended to prohibit both casual sexual intercourse and long term de-facto relationships between Aboriginal and "half-caste" women and non-Aboriginal men. However, in practice these provisions were limited to a prohibition on de-facto relationships by a number of legal rulings. This reflected more tolerant community attitudes to miscegenation in the north where the high ratio of white men to white women made sexual relations with Aboriginal women a "necessary evil".

In 1906 the Crown Solicitor ruled that "cohabitation" applied only to established sexual relationships and not to occasional "visits" to Aboriginal camps. The provision prohibiting the entry of non-Aboriginal men to Aboriginal camps which was intended to limit miscegenation in the camps was affected by a ruling in the Carnarvon Court in 1910 that "Aboriginal camp" referred only to "a recognised camping area" and not to "any place" where Aboriginal or "half-caste" women might be camped for the night. The effectiveness of the provisions was also limited by the fact that the Department had to rely on the police to prefer charges and the latter were often unwilling to charge local whites for sexual relations with Aboriginal women. When charges were laid, some local benches acted to protect the defendants from the full effects of the law. A charge of cohabitation laid against a Wagin farmer, Michael Quinn, in 1907 was dismissed by the local bench and the police complained to the Aborigines Department about the decision. They claimed that two of the three members of the bench had both personal and business relationships with Quinn. Quinn was charged with the same offence in the following year and was fined £5. The woman involved subsequently lost custody of her children, who were placed in the Collie
Salvation Army Home and later transferred to Kalgoorlie.\textsuperscript{57}

From 1906 police in the south began to inform couples living in de-facto relationships that they were to apply to the Chief Protector for permission to marry or face charges of cohabitation under the Act. It was Departmental policy to approve marriages where the couples were "old and [had] previous to the new Act been living together and [had] children", with the exception of those couples who camped with Aborigines. It was assumed that non-Aboriginal men would supply alcohol to Aborigines in the camp.\textsuperscript{58} As will be discussed later, applications from young white men were rejected out of hand. Prinsep was prepared to permit marriages with certain Asian men in the south,\textsuperscript{*} but subsequent Chief Protectors appear to have strongly disapproved.

On receipt of an application to marry, the Department requested a character report on the couple from the local police and the Chief Protector made his decision on that basis. In the case of prospective husbands from other countries, Prinsep required the man to bind himself by law to pay £50 to the Department if the local protector reported that he had deserted his wife or was intending to desert her without making adequate provision. This money would then be used by the Department to provide for the woman and her children.\textsuperscript{59}** Despite the obvious inadequacies of this arrangement, Prinsep insisted on it in a number of cases. During his absence on leave in 1907 his assistant, Edmund Pechelle, modified the arrangement and attempted

\textsuperscript{*} In 1906 Prinsep granted permission for an Indian to marry a young woman from New Norcia despite protests from New Norcia residents that they did not want their daughters to marry "Indians or any other foreigners" (A/310/1906).

\textsuperscript{**} This bore a strong similarity to the special form of marriage introduced by Prinsep in 1903 discussed in the previous chapter.
to impose it on all marriages. By insisting that a prospective husband should deposit £25 with the Department as a surety prior to his marriage, Pechelle in fact intended to make inter-racial marriages prohibitively expensive. He also felt that it would give the couple time to "think things over" and would test their "real intentions". Hopefully, Pechelle added, it would "block the proceedings altogether".60

All this caused immense strain and heartbreak for the couples involved. In 1907 a twenty-two year old clearing contractor approached the Department for permission to marry a seventeen year old "half-caste" girl from a respectable Beverley family. Both parents had given their permission and arrangements had already been made for the wedding reception. The Canon at Beverley and the local police supported the application, but Pechelle stated that such a marriage would "ruin" the young man's life and stated that he would only approve the marriage if the young man deposited £25 with the Department. When he was unable to meet this expense, the situation developed into a deadlock with the couple refusing to be separated and the police threatening to summons the young man for cohabitation. Finally the magistrate in York wrote to Pechelle and recommended that the marriage be allowed to take place. Although such marriages were "abhorrent to all right-minded people", he wrote, "I think it is better in the circumstances for the parties to marry than to live as at present". Pechelle finally relented and the marriage took place with the proviso that the young man signed the marriage form as originally drafted by Prinsep.61

Such actions served to promote hardening attitudes to miscegenation in the south. Applications for marriages decreased rapidly and casual sexual relationships became increasingly covert. From
this time Aborigines in the south became an almost exclusively endogamous population.

The Department had little to do with marriages involving Aborigines until the opening of the "native" settlements when the Chief Protector began to insist on approving all marriages between Aborigines living there, despite the fact that his powers under the Act were confined to inter-racial marriages only. Cohabitation continued in the north although increasing numbers of men living in de-facto relationships were charged under the Act. Some were sent to prison and their families had to turn to the Department for support. The Department objected to this and, as will be discussed later, measures were introduced in the 1911 amending Bill to remedy the situation.

(iii) Firearms

The police welcomed their new powers under the 1905 Act to control Aborigines' use of firearms. In the north there was still considerable fear of Aborigines attacking whites while in the south the police were more concerned about Aborigines using guns in fights amongst themselves. As will be discussed later, they were also keen to prevent Aborigines from using guns to illegally hunt kangaroos for their skins and they saw the 1905 Act as a way of further controlling this activity.

In 1906 the Police Department issued a circular to all police instructing them to rigidly enforce the provisions relating to firearms and as a result several Aborigines in the south had their guns confiscated. The police refused to issue them with licences or to
return their guns to them. * Several Aborigines complained to the Aborigines Department. Early in 1907 Chucky informed the Department that the Bridgetown police had taken his gun and that he was consequently unable to provide for himself and his wife Lucy. Prinsep was aware that many Aborigines in the south depended on guns to hunt for their livelihood and he did not want them forced into dependency on rations. Unlike the police, who appear to have been totally opposed to issuing licences, Prinsep was willing to issue them to approved Aborigines and he granted one to Chucky. The Bridgetown police subsequently warned Chucky that he would lose the licence if he was found shooting kangaroos for their skins. 62 Circulars were subsequently forwarded to all police instructing them to acquaint Aborigines with the provisions and then, after a suitable period, to enforce the restriction. Before the end of the year six Aborigines had been charged at Mount Barker with having unlicensed guns in their possession. 63

The attitude of the Aborigines Department changed after Prinsep left. Late in 1907 Pechelle instructed the protector at New Norcia to discourage Aborigines from applying for licences and to consult the Moora police over all applications as "they may know something about the native who applies which you do not". 64 In 1911 the Department informed the Toodyay police that it was "very adverse to granting gun licences and only in exceptional cases is such done, and then

* Local Justices of the Peace were to decide how the guns were disposed of. Some were retained at the police stations while others were sent in to the Aborigines Department. By 1923 the Department had 69 guns in its possession. These were auctioned off in that year and the £33/8/- gained from the sale was placed in the Department's Trust Account (CS/2434/1921).
THE ABORIGINES ACT, 1905.

PERMIT TO EMPLOY AN ABORIGINAL.

Permission is hereby granted to ____________________________

of ____________________________ to employ ____________________________ [an aboriginal, or a male half-caste under the age of fourteen years, or a female half-caste] ____________________________

This permit shall continue in force until the 31st day of December, 191 __________, unless in the meantime cancelled, and is granted subject to the provisions of "The Aborigines Act, 1905," and the Regulations thereunder, and the following conditions:

1. The employer to supply to the said ____________________________, substantial, good, and sufficient rations, clothing, and blankets, and also medicines and medical attendance when practicable and necessary

Dated the __________ day of ____________________________, 191 __________

Protector of Aborigines.

is Permit to be handed to employer.
only if the police can thoroughly recommend it". There was little likelihood of this. The police could always find reasons to refuse to issue licences. The police at Moora, for example, refused to issue a licence to a local Aboriginal in 1911 simply because they "did not like his appearance".

(iv) Employment

The 1905 Act offered two avenues for the 'protection' of Aborigines in employment: controls on access to Aboriginal workers through the system of permits and agreements, and legal action against employers failing to fulfil their obligations under the terms of the Act. Under Connolly and Gale, steps were taken to enforce control over access to Aboriginal workers and this, rather than legal action against employers, was to remain the focus of Departmental action. Rather than protecting Aboriginal workers in the south, it created impediments to their employment and over the years served to reduce their chances of finding work. Meanwhile, cases of abuse and failure to fulfil employment arrangements on the part of employers went virtually unchecked. Aboriginal workers who broke verbal or written arrangements with their employers often faced arrest and imprisonment.

The Department encountered a marked lack of interest from protectors in enforcing the employment provisions and the police, in particular, considered employment to be outside their jurisdiction. Protectors and police also frequently faced pressure from local employers to overlook the provisions altogether. On the other hand, some employers saw the provisions as a way of legally binding Aborigines to remain in their employ. In some parts of the state local protectors were also employers of Aborigines and this conflict of interests sometimes led to abuse of the system.
On Connolly's initiative, regulations were gazetted in 1907 to disallow the employment of Aborigines by Asiatics and publicans. In 1909 the Department made a survey of the number of permits operating in the state and found that the system was being implemented only minimally in all areas. In the southwest only five permits had been issued between 1908 and 1909. Further regulations gazetted in 1909 were intended to ensure that protectors carried out their duties in this area more assiduously. They were instructed to forward regular lists of all permits issued, cancelled or renewed to the Chief Protector and to prevent abuse of the system by unsuitable employers. Protectors were also instructed to forward names of all persons refused permits to the Department and to all other protectors in their magisterial district. Any person who issued a permit to such an employer without prior consultation with the Chief Protector would be committing an offence.

These measures had some impact: by 1913 fifty-nine Aborigines in the south were employed under permit and in the following year 3,606 Aborigines were reported to be employed under the provisions of the Act in Western Australia. However, protectors required regular prompting to enforce these provisions and in 1916 the Department was again obliged to draw their attention to them.

The efficacy of the Act in this area was also limited by the fact that little action was taken against persons employing without permits, at least in the south. The responsibility for preferring charges lay with the protectors and the police and many were unwilling to take action against employers who were often influential members of the local community. For the same reasons, employers who broke their written or verbal arrangements with Aboriginal workers were rarely prosecuted. The Department was also unwilling to become
involved in any extra legal expenses; besides, such cases had little chance of standing up in court given the prejudices of the local justices. It was Aborigines, rather than protectors, who drew the attention of the Department to instances of injustice. A few even took legal action on their own behalf with no support from the Department. In 1909 George Gidgup informed the Department that he had made a verbal agreement with James Adams of East Beverley to work for forty-one weeks on wages of £1 a week, but had received only £14 of the total amount owing to him. The Department contacted Adams and asked for an explanation. Adams denied that he owed Gidgup money and stated that he had left his employ without notice to attend a sports meeting and had not returned. In conclusion he wrote that he had "no time to waste in writing to refute native stories". The Department did not pursue the investigation and no charges were laid against Adams for employing Gidgup outside the provisions of the 1905 Act. In 1915 Billy Narryer, a farm worker whose employment by Carl Gillespie of Meckering had been arranged by the Department, took his employer to court for non-payment of wages. Gillespie told the court that he had engaged Narryer at £2 a month, not fifteen shillings a week as Narryer claimed, and that Narryer had built up an account at the local store and wages owing to him had been used to pay off this debt. The court dismissed the case. The Department subsequently found that Gillespie had a history of harsh and offensive treatment of Aborigines in his employ. In addition, through some bureaucratic omission, he had not taken out a permit to employ Narryer and had refused to reimburse the Department for the cost of Narryer's fare from Perth to Meckering. Rather than taking legal action, the Department decided that in future Gillespie was to be refused permits to employ Aborigines.
Aborigines who broke agreements with employers were well aware of the unequal treatment they could expect before a bench of local justices. In 1910 Billy Whitimarra, Mickie Roach and Jimmy Vivash, who had been charged with deserting the service of their employer, Mr Clarkson, appealed to the Department for assistance as they did not want to be tried before a bench of "Toodyay squatters". The Toodyay police supported their plea and told the Department that there was reason to believe that local whites had given the Aborigines cause to leave the employment. The Department arranged for the cases to be heard before a stipendiary magistrate from Pingelly in the Toodyay court. Whitimarra and Roach were ordered to return to their employer and to pay costs and Vivash, who faced an additional charge of threatening language, was ordered to pay a fine of ten shillings or seven days in lieu for this charge and was sentenced to one month's imprisonment for deserting service. 

Despite such instances of unjust treatment of Aboriginal workers, Gale expressed satisfaction with the system of 'protection' for Aboriginal employees. In 1912 he told the press that:

The permit system [carried] an obligation on the employer in the direction of feeding and clothing, but the native employed [was] a perfectly free agent, and [committed] no legal offence if he [left] service at a moment's notice. It is therefore obvious that the permit system is an incentive to the employers to look after the welfare of their native servants.

At the same time the Department began to exert control over Aborigines' wages and property in the south. This reflected the widely-held belief that Aborigines were incapable of taking care of their own finances (despite considerable evidence to the contrary) and the growing view in the Department that Aborigines should be
more responsible for their own well-being and not fall back on the Department when they encountered hard times. From 1909 the Department began to encourage Aborigines employed through Head Office and the children's missions to deposit part of their wages in trust accounts supervised by the Department. It did not have the legal power to force Aborigines and employers to agree to this arrangement and in 1910 only eight accounts were in operation. Nevertheless, it represented a further interference in the lives of Aborigines in the south, and the arrangement was imposed more generally by subsequent administrations.

The Department also became involved in the administration of the intestate estates of deceased Aborigines. Here the Department sought to gain control over any moneys involved in order to provide for the deceased's dependants. Capital left from the estate of Robert Ugle, a farmer in the Beverley district who died in 1909, was placed with the Department and used to pay for rations issued to Mrs Ugle and her children. The Department also administered the estate of Johnny Dangin, a farmer in the Greenhills district who died in 1909, despite the fact that he had made out a will leaving the farm to his wife or, in the event of her re-marriage, to his cousin John Kickett. Although his farm had been valued at £390 in 1907 by the

* The 1907 State Children's Act provided a model for this arrangement. White children from state institutions or government subsidised children's homes sent out to employment had to deposit their wages in government savings accounts and they were unable to draw on the accounts until they turned eighteen. The Aborigines Department placed no limitations on the age of Aborigines taking out accounts under its supervision.
Agricultural Bank, the Department accepted a price of £250. Claims amounting to £259/13/11d were admitted against the estate, and in the end Mrs Dangin was left with nothing. 78

The 1911 Aborigines Amendment Act

As early as 1909 Gale began to seek amendments to deal with what he felt were inadequacies in the 1905 Act. He recommended to Connolly the introduction of a minimum fine of £20 for supplying alcohol, the granting of powers to managers of children's missions in line with those contained in the 1907 State Children's Act, and the removal of the 2,000 acres limitation on the size of Aboriginal reserves. * After a tour of inspection in the Kimberley district in 1910 Gale recommended the introduction of corporal punishment for cattle stealing offences, ** and a broader definition of "Aboriginal camp" so as to limit the incidence of prostitution in the north. He also recommended that Aborigines be charged with receiving alcohol and that sentences of up to six months' imprisonment should be introduced for the offence. He further advised that measures be drawn up to regulate the payment of wages to Aborigines in the southern settled areas. 79

Connolly opposed the introduction of corporal punishment pointing out that such powers were already contained in the Criminal Code. 80

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* This would enable the Department to gazette the entire area of the Lock Hospital islands as an Aboriginal reserve and to declare large tracts of land in coastal areas of the north as Aboriginal reserves (that is, prohibited to non-Aborigines) to prevent the landing of pearling crews on the coast and to thereby limit miscegenation in the area.

** This reflected Gale's own pastoral bias and was also intended to reduce numbers of Aborigines imprisoned for cattle stealing offences.
However, he was keen to see the introduction of amendments to make the Act more workable and more relevant to the expanding role of the Department, and in October 1911 an amending Bill incorporating ideas from both Connolly and Gale, was placed before the Legislative Council.

Introducing the Bill in the Legislative Council, Connolly stated that amendments were necessary to rectify certain deficiencies in the 1905 Act and to improve the administration of the Department generally. Provision was to be made for the appointment of a Deputy Chief Protector to take over the running of the Department during the Chief Protector's frequent tours of inspection in the north, and the restriction of 2,000 acres on the maximum size of Aboriginal reserves was to be removed. To expedite the removal of part-Aboriginal children to missions and to prevent their parents from taking them back against the wishes of the Department, the Chief Protector was to be the legal guardian of all "illegitimate half-caste children", to the exclusion of the rights of their Aboriginal mothers. To improve the operation of the missions, the powers and duties of mission managers were to be brought in line with those of managers of institutions for white children under the 1907 State Children's Act.*

To avoid future abuse of the employment system, protectors were to be prohibited from granting permits to themselves.

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* The 1907 State Children's Act stipulated that children over the age of six were to attend school regularly to the age of fourteen or until they had reached the compulsory educational standard required by the Public Education Act of 1899; managers could bind children who had passed the compulsory educational standard to apprenticeships with approved employers or send the children to live with suitable families; the children were to be supervised in these places by the managers; the children's wages were to be paid into a government savings bank account and they were not to draw on the account until they reached the age of eighteen. Penalties of a maximum fine of £20 or six months' imprisonment with hard labour were included in the schedule for persons found guilty of ill-treating the children (7 Edward, No. 33).
or to their agents without the prior approval of the Chief Protector. To further limit miscegenation, it was to be an offence under the Act for a non-Aboriginal person to be found in "any place" where Aboriginal or "half-caste" women were camped, and to avoid unnecessary prosecutions, the Chief Protector's permission would be required before charges of cohabitation could be laid. To increase protection of Aboriginal and "half-caste" women it was to be an offence for any unauthorised person to remove a woman of any age from an Aboriginal institution. To bring the legislation in line with the 1911 Licensing Act* and to further limit the supply of alcohol to Aborigines, the penalty for supplying alcohol or opium to Aborigines was to be increased to a maximum fine of £100 or six months' imprisonment or both, and the reduction of these penalties below the minimum levels stipulated in the Act would not be permissible. In addition, it was to be an offence for Aborigines or "half-castes" to receive alcohol or to have alcohol in their possession and they would be liable to a maximum fine of £5 or one month's imprisonment. The Bill also allowed for the removal of Aborigines who committed repeated offences to areas outside of their home districts under ministerial warrant, to be retained there at the Minister's pleasure. On the other hand, to ensure fairer trials for Aborigines, no plea of guilty was to be entered by an Aboriginal without the prior approval of

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* The 1911 Licensing Act (1 Geo. V, No. 32) repealed earlier statutes pertaining to alcohol. It increased the penalty for supplying alcohol to Aborigines either for their own use or for the use of another to a maximum fine of £100 or six months' imprisonment, and the penalty for allowing an Aboriginal to enter licensed premises was also increased. The definition of "Aboriginal" contained in the 1902 legislation was retained. This Act did not make it an offence for Aborigines or "half-castes" to receive alcohol.
the local protector and no policeman who was also a protector was allowed to assent to a plea of guilty. Protectors were to be permitted to address the court and jury and to cross-examine witnesses on behalf of Aboriginal defendants.81

The Bill was passed with only minor amendments. Needless to say it did little to improve the situation of Aborigines. Instead it led to a marked increase in Aboriginal convictions which grew from 58 throughout the state in 1910 to 240 in 1913.82 Significantly, 59.8 per cent of all convictions in 1913 were alcohol-related, reflecting the strict enforcement by the police of the new provisions relating to alcohol. The local courts imposed harsh sentences on Aborigines: a mission-educated part-Aboriginal was sentenced in the Moora Court in 1911 to three months’ imprisonment or a £5 fine for having a bottle of beer in his possession,83 while three Aborigines were sentenced to two months’ hard labour each in the Guildford Court in 1915 for having wine in their possession.84 Few Aborigines were able to pay the fines when this alternative was offered by the courts and most simply went to prison. The records suggest that most Aborigines imprisoned in the south from this time until the 1930s were convicted on charges of receiving alcohol under the 1905 Act, or for drunkenness or drunk and disorderly conduct under the 1892 Police Act. This reflected the special legislation and the near obsession of the police in controlling Aborigines' access to alcohol, rather than high levels of consumption of alcohol during this period. While there were certainly some individuals who drank to excess, Aborigines today state that they were exceptional. Cliff Humphries recalls that Aborigines in the Kellerberrin district would
...get a bottle of rum or whisky, and they'd take that home and they'd drink it like medicine. They never got drunk on it.
...They'd have a yarn, but they never got drunk. They don't drink enough to get drunk. 85

Exemptions

Aborigines in the south opposed the increasing restrictions on their personal liberties in a variety of ways. As we have seen, some chose to openly defy the new laws while others attempted to devise ways of getting around them. They frequently ended up in prison. A small number of educated Aborigines and part-Aborigines chose to protest within the limits of the system. The most vocal complaints came from those part-Aborigines who had previously not been affected by any special laws. Some wrote to the press or their local members of Parliament. William Harris wrote to the Sunday Times in 1913 objecting to the treatment of Aborigines and part-Aborigines in the south who

...have been brought up and educated on the same lines as whites - who pay taxes, and whose ideals of life are the same as those of a white man. Yet by law, these people are denied the suffrage, and further are not allowed to enter a public house for refreshments. 86

However, the general public showed little interest in these complaints and since persons of the full and half descent had been disenfranchised by the 1907 State Electoral Act (by virtue of the 1902 Commonwealth Franchise Act this meant disenfranchisement at the Federal level as well)* few politicians were concerned at their plight.

* Under Section 3 of the 1902 Commonwealth Franchise Act (No. 8 of 1902) persons had to meet the following requirements to be entitled to vote: to be over the age of twenty-one; to have lived in Australia continuously for six months; to be natural-born or naturalised subjects of the King; and to have their names on the Electoral Roll for any Electoral Division.
A good number of literate part-Aborigines expressed their objections in letters to the Aborigines Department and requested exemption from the repressive laws. Not surprisingly, given the actions of the police, most of their complaints centred on the restriction on alcohol.

Following the passing of the 1911 amending legislation there was a dramatic increase in applications for exemption from the Act. In 1912 Fred Garlot (Garlett), who leased a farm of 360 acres near Pingelly, asked why he should have to pay rates and taxes if he was not entitled to put his name on the Electoral Roll or enter hotels.\footnote{Other Aborigines who applied for exemptions between 1911 and 1914 included: John Newman, a respected farm worker from York; Fred Carnet Mead, a former stockman of Guildford; the Isaacs family of Busselton (including Samuel Isaacs who had played a major role in rescuing survivors from the Georgette, shipwrecked off the coast near Margaret River in 1870); Thomas Kickett, a farmer of the Beverley district and brother of William Noongale Kickett who had accompanied Forrest on his overland expedition to Adelaide in 1874; John Kickett, farmer of Greenhills; W.C. Bolton, a member of the Moora football team; Frederick Henry Wattling, a jockey from Busselton and owner of three race horses; William Garlett and his sons Ernest and Richard, leaseholders in the East Brookton district; Alfred Taylor of New Norcia, a tradesman carpenter who had worked at the mission for 35 years; Thomas Webb who worked for the Agricultural Department at the Ludlow pine plantation; Beal and Bevan Ugle, farmers from the Beverley district; Ernest Farrell, a New Norcia employee for 25 years; Benedict, Alfred and Sylvester Cooper, farmers and ratepayers of the Toodyay district.}

A petition signed "the half-castes" was sent to the Colonial Secretary from representatives of several families in the Moora district.\footnote{The families listed on the petition were as follows: Lawrence, Indich, Taylor, Stack, Ryder, Blurton, Farrell, Egan. They had all previously been attached to New Norcia Mission.} They stated that they were well-educated, did not associate with Aborigines living in camps and that they paid rates and taxes. They objected strongly to the laws under which they were obliged to live and, in particular, to the restrictions on access to alcohol and entry
to licensed premises. They could not even enter a refreshment booth when travelling by train for fear of being arrested by the police.

In conclusion, they stated:

It is not altogether fair to treat us as dogs for it is nothing but like dogs we are treated...See what you can do for us as we don't want to be left like a lot of cast-offs. 88

Exemptions were rarely granted. Rather than seeing them as the right of Aborigines and part-Aborigines who had attained a "suitable degree of civilisation" as was intended by the framers of the 1905 Act, the Department came to regard them as an avenue to alcohol for Aborigines not exempted from the Act. The police referred to exemptions as "a permit to obtain liquor". 89 The few who were granted exemptions remained "permanently on approval" and faced the constant threat of having their exemptions revoked. This placed considerable strain on individuals facing requests from relatives to fulfil kinship obligations by getting them a drink. In addition, exemption from the 1905 Act did not mean exemption from the 1911 Licensing Act which included a maximum penalty of a £100 fine or six months' imprisonment for persons supplying alcohol to Aborigines, and which made it an offence for Aborigines to be present on licensed premises unless lawfully employed and with the permission of the Chief Protector of Aborigines.

Despite its reluctance to grant exemptions, the Department went through the formalities of requesting character reports from the police on all applicants. The police, preoccupied with enforcing the restriction on alcohol in their towns, usually saw the applications as an attempt to thwart them in carrying out their duties. The constable stationed at Bridgetown in 1910 wrote that an application from a local Aboriginal was "an endeavour on their part
to defeat me". The police also saw exemptions as a potential source of friction amongst local Aborigines. The police at Beverley advised against an application because exemptions "caused a great deal of friction and jealousy amongst the others, and it only means that the exempted native is made a sort of go-between, the others pay and he gets the drink for them".

The Department usually accepted the recommendations of the local police. However, there were occasional disagreements. Thomas Kickett's application had the support of the local member of Parliament and the Beverley police and the Department was also in favour of granting him an exemption. However the Northam District Police Officer strongly opposed the application, not for any reasons relating to Kickett's character, but because the Licensing Act "absolutely debars Aborigines from getting alcohol". Kickett's application was subsequently rejected.

The Department's failure to implement the exemption clause marked a further flaw in the administration of the 1905 Act and in the nature of the Act itself.

**Conclusion**

By 1911 many Aborigines in the south were already experiencing the impact of the 1905 Act and rigid Departmental control. At the local level, certain provisions of the Act were being enforced repressively by the police, and the Act was manipulated to protect white rather than Aboriginal interests. At the same time, changes to the ration system had precipitated the movement of destitute and elderly Aborigines into towns in the south and Departmental interference in Aboriginal family life through the removal of children to missions had caused a number of families to seek to enrol their
children in local state schools. While the Department ignored the Aborigines' objections to the growing infringements of their personal liberties, it showed a ready willingness to respond to complaints from whites about Aborigines. This was reflected in the north in the establishment of several closed institutions to provide for the segregation of Aborigines from the wider community, and in the south in the establishment of a small number of gazetted Aboriginal camping reserves in coastal towns and the Department's proposal to develop the children's missions into farming settlements where Aborigines could live in enduring segregated communities. However, as long as there were no widespread complaints about Aborigines in the south, the government showed little interest in the implementation of the settlement scheme. The impetus for its introduction and for the rigid implementation of the 1905 Aborigines Act across the board in the south stemmed from broader socio-economic changes in the area from the turn of the century. These changes culminated in an outburst of racism and discrimination against Aborigines in the south during the pre-war years and in demands from the white community for the total segregation of the Aborigines.
FOOTNOTES – Chapter Three

5. Ibid.
6. A/450/1907.
10. Ibid: 68.
14. Ibid.
15. AF/1263/1909.
17. AR/1906, 1910.
18. AF/824/1910.
22. AF/987/1908; AF/52/1909.
24. AF/1644/1912.
25. AF/231/1910.
27. AR/1911: 7; AF/2582/1914.
30. WA 29/4/1911.
32. WA 6/5/1911.
33. Ibid.
34. Telfer, 1939: 64.
35. AF/269/1915.
36. Ibid.
37. A/17/1907.
38. AR/1906, 1910.
39. AF/215/1913.
40. GG 19/2/1909: 588.
42. AF/51/1915.
43. AF/576/1911.
44. AF/1202/1911.
49. WA 6/5/1913.
50. Williams Police Station, Circular Order 8/1909.
52. A/593/1906.
53. Bunbury Court Records, 26/7/1909.
54. AF/256/1910.
55. A/461/1928.
57. AF/387/1910.
58. CS/2076/1920.
60. A/2076/1920.
61. Ibid.
62. A/186/1907.
63. Mount Barker Police Station, 18/9/1907.
64. AF/999/1911.
65. AF/1023/1911.
66. AF/999/1911.
67. GG 20/12/1907: 4082.
68. AR/1909.
69. GG 19/2/1909: 588.
70. AR/1913, 1914.
71. AR/1916.
72. AF/65/1909.
73. AF/230/1915.
74. AF/866/1910.
75. Truth 13/4/1912.
76. AR/1910.
77. AF/988/1909.
78. AF/1270/1909.
79. AF/676/1911.
80. AF/83/1911.
81. PD, 39, 1911: 1325–1329.
82. AR/1910, 1913.
83. AF/1434/1911.
84. AF/850/1915.
86. ST 6/4/1913.
87. AF/489/1912.
88. AF/95/1912.
89. AF/498/1913.
91. AF/917/1910.
92. AF/544/1914.
93. AF/498/1913.
CHAPTER FOUR

Introduction

During the first decade of this century the Western Australian government embarked on an ambitious programme of agricultural development in the southern inland areas of the state. This led to a rapid change from pastoralism as the major form of land utilisation in these areas to intensive cultivation of wheat on small, individually owned farms, and to the establishment of a closely-settled white population on the farms and in the small rural towns which developed to service the farming communities. While the development of the wheat belt revived the state's flagging economy after the decline of the 1890s goldrushes and brought economic stability and prosperity to new and established white settlers in the area, it had long-term adverse consequences for the Aborigines already living there. Their established economic and social adaptations were broken down and with them went much of their former independence. Although development brought an initial improvement in living standards for some, the combined effects of the clearing of the land, closer white settlement and the prejudice of the new white settlers left many Aborigines in the south poverty-stricken and socially ostracized in their own country by the outbreak of the First World War.

Agricultural Development in the South: 1903-1914

In 1903 the Western Australian government embarked on a major programme of agricultural development which focussed on the production of wheat in the Avon, Midlands and Great Southern districts of the south. Although a number of small wheat farms had been established in these areas during the 1890s, intensive cultivation beyond the
fertile valleys of the Avon River remained minimal at the turn of the century and much of the land was held under pastoral lease or in large private estates interspersed between vast tracts of unalienated Crown land.

The government's agricultural programme was both a continuation of existing land development policies and a response to changing economic conditions in the south at the turn of the century. On attaining self government in 1886 the state abandoned the Imperial government's land policies which had enabled individuals to take up vast holdings without any obligation to fully utilise the land. Instead it sought to bring about maximum utilisation of all arable land in the south through the settlement of a "bold peasantry" on small, individually owned farming blocks. This was to be achieved through direct government intervention, and during the late 1880s and 1890s legislation was passed to make land readily accessible to settlers with limited capital and to provide them with easy finance to develop their blocks.* To ensure that the land was fully utilised, its transfer was made conditional on the holder carrying out certain improvements within a specified period. Privately financed railway building programmes were also encouraged by the government to link farming districts to the coastal ports of Albany and Fremantle.**

* The legislative framework was contained in the 1887 Lands Regulations, initiated by John Forrest (then Commissioner for Crown Lands) and the 1893 Homestead Act and these Regulations were consolidated along with other legislation pertaining to land in the 1898 Lands Act. The 1898 Lands Act made possible four ways of acquiring land: free homestead grants of 160 acres, purchase of land through deferred payment with residence, deferred payment without residence, and direct purchase of the land (Glynn, 1975).

** The West Australian Land Company began work on the Great Southern Line in 1884 and in 1894 the Midland Railway Company opened a line to link Perth to Geraldton (Batty, 1924).
Despite these initiatives, land development during the 1890s was minimal. Although the 1890s goldrushes stimulated the local agricultural economy there was still insufficient cheap credit, rail transport, mechanisation and knowledge of farming techniques suited to local conditions for real expansion to occur.\(^1\) In addition, vast areas of land in prime locations remained tied up in private estates\(^*\) and there were few potential farmers to take up the land. Although the 1890s goldrushes precipitated a dramatic growth in the state's population, from 49,782 in 1891 to 179,708 in 1901,\(^2\) most of the new arrivals were seeking gold and after equipping themselves in part, they set off for the fields. In fact there was a drain of men away from the southern districts as they too set off to try their luck prospecting or to establish commercial enterprises.

The situation changed dramatically from the turn of the century. The decline in gold mining during the late 1890s led to an exodus of diggers from the fields and, lacking the money to finance their way home, they drifted into camps in the Perth metropolitan area where their numbers were boosted by hopeful immigrants who continued to arrive from drought-stricken areas of the eastern states. There was little work available and the government soon found itself facing the state's first major unemployment problem. Given its commitment to land development, it was a logical step for the government to resettle the unemployed on the land. The expanding world market

\(^*\) The West Australian Land Company, for example, held over one and a half million hectares of land stretching along the Great Southern Line, granted to the Company in exchange for building the line. Although the British based Company agreed to arrange for the settlement of 5,000 farmers on this land it remained locked up until 1896 when the state government bought up the Company and threw the land open for selection. The Midland Railway Company held three and a half million acres along the proposed Midland line under similar conditions and it was not until 1906, after the Company was bought up by the state government, that this land was thrown open for selection (Glynn, 1975; Bignell, 1981).
for wheat provided an added incentive, together with advances in methods of wheat production in the eastern states which had led to substantially higher wheat yields and the opening up of new areas of land for wheat cultivation.  

The government followed closely the initiatives of the 1890s. Existing legislation was amended to make the land more accessible to the "little man" and to liberalise the government's system of agricultural credit ** and a major railway building programme was undertaken to link all newly opened lands to major lines by means of feeder lines. Road networks were also extended.  

Land previously held under pastoral lease was resumed and owners of large private estates were pressured to either fully utilise the land or to make it available to others. Some responded by converting to wheat farming while those in marginal areas took up mixed wheat and sheep farming. Other estates were subdivided and sold on the open market and between 1908 and 1913 the government purchased twenty-three private estates, thereby opening up 300,000 acres for selection.  

Vast areas of Crown land were also thrown open for selection. To ensure a sustained flow of farmers onto the land the government embarked on a programme of assisted immigration and between 1903 and 1915 some 55,000 British immigrants arrived in Western Australia and this, together with natural increase, boosted the state's population to 276,675 by 1915.  

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* These advances originated largely in South Australia. The value of superphosphates both in increasing wheat yields and in making soils suitable for wheat cultivation was proven there during the 1890s and the discovery of large deposits of superphosphate on the island of Nauru in the Pacific Ocean provided the state with ready access to large quantities of the fertiliser. Fallow cultivating, also developed in South Australia, had also been shown to lead to significant increases in wheat yields (Glynn, 1975).

** From 1906 settlers could receive credit from the Agricultural Bank to the value of £2,000 to cover past liabilities, general improvements to the land and farming operations under easy repayment conditions (McAleer, n.d.).
Utilisation of land under crop in W.A. 1890–1941 (from Rowley, 1945)

- Green feed and other cereal and fodder crops
- Cereal hay
- Oats
- Wheat
- Fruit, vegetables and Tobacco

Acres (000's)

Area under crop

Year

1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940

5250 4500 3750 3000 2250 1500 750
Railway Development as an index of growth of the South West of W.A. (from Makin, 1970)

1888

1898

1918

1953

Mt. Magnet

Southern Cross

Kalgoorlie

Esperance

Perth & Fremantle

Northam

Bunbury

Katanning

Albany

Geraldton

Mt. Magnet

Southern Cross

Kalgoorlie

Esperance

Perth & Fremantle

Northam

Bunbury

Katanning

Albany

Geraldton

Scale in miles
There was a strong positive response to the government's initiatives. The unemployed rushed to take up blocks and by 1912 there were nine thousand individually owned land holdings in the state. These new settlers were seeking economic independence and social respectability and for many their "over-riding desire" was to

...advance materially...[and] to be thought respectable....Fundamentally their aim was middle-class solvency - a prosperous farm with stock and machinery, and a solid house filled with essential furniture. The puritanical virtues of thrift, hard work, and sober living were followed scrupulously by a strong core who believed in six days of labour and the seventh spent in church.

Achieving these aims was not easy. All genuine new settlers* faced an initial period of "primitive conditions, monotony, discomfort and hard work" and few set out with more than a "horse and cart, with a tent and provisions for some months and a tank". Most came as families and, while some men left their wives and children in town while they made arrangements for some temporary accommodation, many took their families with them and they worked the land together.

They began by clearing the bush, felling the trees and undergrowth for burning off, leaving the land ready for cultivation with a horse-drawn "stump-jump" plough. With their limited means few settlers could wait more than one season for an economic return on their labours and most carried out minimal cultivation and began cropping immediately. While further clearing continued, fences and a farm house had to be erected to meet the conditions of occupancy. As improvements were made the farmers became eligible for credit

* Glynn (1975) points out that in addition to the "genuine" settlers there were a number who took up land with the intention of developing it quickly and then reselling it at a profit.
Early Settlers in the Wheat Belt, c. 1905
from the Agricultural Bank and this enabled them to pay off debts to local storekeepers, to meet loans from commercial banks and to finance further work on their land. Most farmers concentrated solely on wheat production as the market price for wheat remained high and the purchase of stock required considerable financial outlay. Dingoes and noxious weeds also made sheep raising a hazardous enterprise. Some farmers took up outside work to supplement their income doing seasonal or contract clearing work for more prosperous farmers in the district, or labouring on the railways or the roads. In some areas they did sandalwood cutting, mallet bark stripping, * or hunted for animal skins to sell to local traders. Game formed a basic part of the daily diet of many families.

Through their labours the new settlers developed strong ties with their small blocks and a strong identification with their locality and other farmers in the surrounding district. Although there were naturally divisions and antagonisms within any one community, the people's common background of deprivation, hard work and 'pioneering' the land gave them a strong sense of community and pride in local achievements. This was fostered by a range of communal activities including picnics, church going, sports days, bush dances, swimming parties and visiting. The small towns which developed provided a focus for the surrounding rural communities, acting as a general meeting place and providing a range of services such as shops, medical care, schools, churches, hotels and entertainment in the form of dances, concerts, sports days, races and annual

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* Mallet bark comes from a variety of eucalypt which grows in a limited habitat along the Great Southern Railway line. The bark is rich in tannin which is used in the tanning process. The export trade in mallet bark began in 1903 and by 1905 it had an annual export value of £154,000 (Colebatch, 1929).
agricultural shows. The quality of these services and the appearance of the towns became a matter of considerable pride for town residents and local farmers, representing the achievements and respectability of the local community to visitors and neighbouring communities. A range of local organisations emerged to supervise the town services including Roads Boards (responsible for road building, the use of public facilities and reserve land and town improvements), Hospital Boards, Boards of Health, and local School Boards (precursors of the Parents and Citizens Associations).

The success of the government's agricultural development programme is evident in the statistics for the period. Between 1903 and 1912 the area of alienated land in the state had grown to twenty million acres and the wheat acreage grew from 138,000 in 1903 to 1.4 million in 1914.10 By 1914 wheat was the state's major export item with an export value of £2.7 million compared to £382 in 1900.11

These changes permanently altered the face of the south. Vast areas of bushland were cleared and settled and small farms of less than one thousand acres replaced the sprawling pastoral stations of the nineteenth century. Wheat was the new staple and intensive agriculture rather than pastoralism the major form of land utilisation. Stock raising under modified pastoral conditions was confined to marginal areas to the north, south and east of the new wheat belt. The area was now criss-crossed by railway lines and roads linking the small farms to busy rural centres and it supported a relatively large and closely settled white population. By the end of the first decade of this century, the "new settlers" were no longer "new", rather they had become a permanent rural population who saw themselves as the "pioneers" and therefore the rightful owners of the land.
Aborigines and Agricultural Development

The area chosen for development by the government was inhabited by about 75 per cent of the Aboriginal population in the south. Their economy and lifestyle were built around employment on the pastoral stations and hunting and camping on the vast tracts of uncleared land in this area. As has been discussed, these adaptations provided them with a degree of economic independence and enabled them to retain their ties with the land and certain elements of traditional Aboriginal life. With the development of the wheat belt the Aborigines were forced off the land, their existing way of life was destroyed and they were left trapped in a life of poverty in small camps on the fringes of the wheat belt towns.

Pastoralism to Agriculture

The development of the wheat belt effectively put an end to the pastoral industry in the southern inland districts and the lifestyles which Aborigines had built up around it. As has been discussed, the stations had provided a range of permanent and casual semi-skilled work for a central core of Aboriginal workers along with a limited range of services for the workers and their dependants. The paternalistic relationship between the pastoralists and Aborigines was grounded in inequality and the exploitation of Aboriginal labour, but the pastoralists, isolated from the centres of white settlement, sometimes found company with their Aboriginal employees and their families. A number of single pastoral workers also established families with Aboriginal women on the stations. Meanwhile, other Aborigines earned a living hunting for skins on the pastoral runs and adjacent unalienated Crown land and they had only marginal contact with whites. They followed a semi-traditional lifestyle, living
in the bush and camping at recognised sites, hunting and gathering food and hunting skins which were sold to purchase basic commodities such as flour, tobacco and clothing.

The resumption of the pastoral leases and the throwing open of large tracts of unalienated land for intensive small scale farming irrevocably altered the Aborigines' adaptations. Although some pastoralists retained relatively large areas of land they had less need for Aboriginal workers: those who turned to wheat production needed workers only during the initial clearing of the land and for seasonal farm work, while those in marginal areas who continued to run sheep, fenced their properties and took on workers mainly during the shearing season. Few continued to employ Aborigines on a permanent basis (although a number of Aborigines from the north were employed on large properties outside Toodyay) and, in taking on casual workers, many of the established settlers showed a definite preference for taking on white workers now living in their districts. Marchant (1981) suggests that they were influenced by derogatory stereotypes of Aboriginal workers which were gaining currency in the wider community. However, there is also evidence to suggest that they were simply attempting to "help their own", and employers in the Williams district for example were reported to have "harassed" themselves to find work for unemployed whites in their area while Aborigines were unable to find work although "willing and able". At the same time the decreased size of their properties, combined with fencing and cultivation of the land, meant that they were unwilling to allow Aborigines to set up their camps and hunt game. The new white settlers, carving their small farms out of the bush, were even more opposed to the presence of Aborigines on their blocks. Meanwhile, most established settlers found themselves at the apex
Jack Hart, Station Worker in
the Williams District, n.d.
of growing local rural communities and no longer had any need for the company of Aborigines.

There was some concern about the future of southern Aborigines as the need for their labour on the stations decreased and in 1904 a group of employers recommended to the Aborigines Department that a system of state employment of Aborigines be introduced. They suggested as suitable occupations rabbit killing, mallet bark stripping and the eradication of noxious weeds. In the case of the latter they recommended that workers be paid daily in rations and tobacco with an added bonus for each heap of weeds collected and for their acceptance that they were not to "roam about certain parts of the country with impunity". However, the Department took no action and the pastoralists were left to deal with the situation as they liked.

Many simply kicked their former employees off the land when they were no longer needed. Johnny Cockles had worked as a shepherd for the Muirs of Forest Hill (between Manjimup and Mount Barker) for fourteen years when he was ordered off the station in 1905 with his wife Tubian and their four children after the fencing-in of the station's pastures. Others harassed Aborigines to show them they were no longer welcome. Two young men working on a grubbing contract at Jerramungup in 1906 informed the local police that the station manager, Jock Hassell, was "hounding" them and threatening to shoot them for no apparent reason. Only a few station owners were prepared to allow Aborigines to continue to camp on their land. Generally the latter were elderly people with little chance of finding employment and who strongly resisted any attempt to remove them from what they believed was their country. Billy Nelly was one of several elderly Aboriginal men in the far southwest with a young wife and
family to support.* He had worked for the Moirs of Glenvale (on the south coast) for twenty years and after he became blind in 1903 they agreed to allow him to continue to camp on the station and to issue him with rations. However, pressure from the Aborigines Department to transfer the issue of rations from settlers to the police in towns threatened these arrangements. In 1909 fourteen elderly Aborigines were camped on Thomas Muir's property, Deeside (near Manjimup), and he issued them with rations which they supplemented with bush tucker. In that year the Bridgetown police recommended to the Aborigines Department that the camp be moved to town and the people issued with rations there. The Aborigines objected strongly to this proposal, stating that they did not want to leave their home and that the Bridgetown police would shoot their dogs. Although Muir insisted that they be allowed to remain, the camp had been broken up by 1914 and the Aborigines moved into camps closer to town.17

Events at New Norcia provide a telling case of the tensions which arose as old established relationships between Aborigines and whites broke down and as the Aborigines were pushed off the land to seek alternative employment. At the time of Bishop Salvado's death in 1900, the mission had a population of some 200 Aborigines and was the major employer of Aborigines in the Midlands district who were employed in pastoral and agricultural work on its outstations and at the mission itself.18 However, as a result of the

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* This reflects the continued traditional practice of marrying young women to older men discussed in Chapter One. There were also a small number of men in outlying areas of the south who had more than one wife.
government's agricultural development policies from the turn of the century, mission land was progressively resumed by the government or sold by the mission authorities, and by 1909 mission land holdings had fallen from an original 967,000 acres to 102,000 acres. In response to this the mission gradually reduced its pastoral operations and at the same time invested in the mechanisation of its agricultural activities. The policies of Salvado's successor, Bishop Torres, together with continuing conflicts with the Aborigines Department over subsidies to the mission's children's orphanages, led to further changes at New Norcia. From the turn of the century the focus of the Benedictine missionary effort was switched to the north of the state* while New Norcia concentrated on developing colleges for the "superior education" of white children and providing institutionalised care for Aboriginal children. The white and Aboriginal children were kept quite separate and white parents considering sending their children to New Norcia were assured that segregation was enforced. At the same time Torres encouraged monks and brothers at New Norcia to lead a more refined and secluded life.

This led to a dramatic change in relations between New Norcia's Aboriginal residents and the missionaries. There was now little work for Aborigines at the mission and they were encouraged to move off to work for farmers in the surrounding district, leaving their children behind to be educated in the mission orphanages. Although there was criticism of the changing emphasis of the mission in the

* In 1908 the Benedictines established Drysdale River Mission at Napier Broome Bay on the north Kimberley coast, later known as Kalumburu (Biskup, 1973).
New Norcia Benedictine Mission

showing new buildings.

Original Aboriginal cottages in foreground, 1933.
Perth press,* the Aborigines appear to have been quite willing to move off to outside work. They had been taught in Salvado's time that New Norcia was their home and they were probably under the impression that they would be able to use the mission as a base and to visit their children as they wished. However it soon became obvious that this was not to be the case. Their visits were tolerated rather than encouraged, and their access to their children was curtailed. Parents who took their children off on holidays were informed that they would not be readmitted to the orphanages.²³

The parents were angered by the difference between the facilities being built for the white children and the run-down orphanages in which their children were accommodated. Some had mistakenly believed that the new buildings were for their children and, on being informed of the true state of affairs, objected that Salvado had told them they were "for the natives". Harold Willaway recalls that his mother was a young girl when the Saint Gertrude's College for Girls was opened in 1908. She was one of the

...first to go in. They were only young girls. They were only there twelve months or so and Torres he thought he had better ideas. He got all the white people from around the district and made it up for them and it became the [College] and the people brought their girls in and the native girls had to go back to the old place and the white girls took over."²⁴

At Christmas in 1907 thirty-two Aborigines, led by George Shaw, Emmanuel Jackimarra and Lucas Moody, attacked the New Norcia Orphanages and the mission overseer, Louis Brewerton, who was asleep

* A letter in the Morning Herald in March 1904 attacked the mission authorities for abandoning their stock-raising activities and agricultural activities in favour of a life of monastic retreat, and for neglecting their duties towards the Aborigines at the mission (MH 12/3/1904).
in an adjoining building, was challenged to come out and face the men. The Sister's premises in the girls' orphanage were invaded and stones and insults were hurled at the monks. The mission authorities blamed the episode on alcohol, stating that the "ring-leaders" came from outside the mission and had no right to be there. In fact, the three leaders of the attack had family ties with New Norcia dating back to the 1860s, and it is more likely that the incident was an expression of resentment by the Aborigines to their treatment by the monks rather than the result of a drinking spree. Shaw, Jackimarra and Moody were subsequently arrested and sentenced to three months' imprisonment. Nevertheless, Shaw continued to rage against the New Norcia authorities, albeit through orthodox channels. He wrote several letters to the Aborigines Department over the next three years in which he alleged that the mission was

...no home for the native at all. They keep a few hands here to carry bricks because they are cheap but I can assure you that if you are sick they have no time for such a native.

The Aborigines Department's Travelling Inspector verified Shaw's allegations in 1911 during a brief tour of inspection. He found that only ten Aborigines were regularly employed at the mission and those whose services were no longer required were discouraged from visiting the mission.

The outbreak of violence at New Norcia was exceptional. The risk involved and the small numbers of Aborigines in other areas militated against such concerted protests. Most Aborigines simply moved off into rural employment while a few joined the white settlers in a bid to set up their own farms. Others rejected these options and, taking advantage of new openings in the skin trade, sought a
Aboriginal Shepherd with Children at
at Moorabbin Station, Kellerberrin District, c. 1900
living from hunting. Many Aborigines continued to camp and hunt on the land despite objections from old and new white settlers until sufficient pressure was brought to bear to make them stop. However, their experiences left an enduring sense of injustice which has been handed down through the generations of Aboriginal families.*

Cliff Humphries, an Aboriginal born near Quairading in 1910, grew up near Mooranoppin Station owned by the Leake family in the Kellerberrin district. He recalls that Aborigines

...made Mooranoppin station...I don't like to say this but a lot of poor Nyungars, they slaved there for nothing. Just for clothes and a bit of tucker. They cleared all that country and they look after sheep and they never got nothing for it....That's what the wadjala [whites] did a long time ago. That's when they really robbed old Nyungars then. They done 'em down.

Tom Bennell was born at Brookton in 1907 and he recalls that the Bennell family was

...the oldest generation in Brookton. They owned Brookton before the white man came. Brookton was always a special meeting place for Aborigines, it was their regular run. They used to call it Kalkarni. Other Nyungs would come down the line to see the Brookton mob or come up the river. Some come across from the west or the south. There used to be a lot of black boys there for their camps. But the white people took Brookton off the Aborigines and they cut all those black boys down. Old Felix Bennell [Tom's uncle] told me about the white man taking Brookton off the Aborigines.*

* The Aborigines' response bears similarities with that of Aborigines in the Kimberleys during the 1970s when they were put off the stations following the introduction of a minimum wage for Aboriginal workers in the pastoral industry.
Hunting

The hunting of game for meat and skins remained an important part of the southwest Aborigines' economy until the end of the first decade of this century. However, it was increasingly threatened by agricultural development and closer settlement and from 1911 it was virtually impossible for Aborigines to make a living from hunting. Many Aborigines were reported to have preferred to earn a living through hunting rather than turning to rural employment. It provided them with a degree of economic independence and enabled them to continue to follow their own lifestyle in the bush. With their intimate knowledge of the bush and hunting techniques they were well equipped to support themselves in this way and they needed little equipment apart from guns, dogs, traps and a horse and cart to earn themselves a fairly comfortable living. Many hunted in areas of marginal development to the east of the Great Southern railway line, southwest of Kojonup along the Tone, Gordon and Frankland Rivers and in the heavily forested areas between Manjimup and Busselton. They often hunted in the bush for months at a time, coming back to areas of closer settlement at regular intervals to sell their skins and to buy stores. Elderly Aborigines in receipt of rations did some hunting to supplement their rations and they often sold the skins to purchase tobacco and clothing, while Aborigines in rural employment also hunted to add to their daily diet and their incomes. However, they increasingly encountered opposition from the new settlers objecting to their presence on their land.

* For example, the Department’s Travelling Inspector reported in 1902 that the 200 or so Aborigines in the Katanning district did some burning off for local farmers but preferred to hunt for a living (AR/1902).
Although the trade in kangaroo skins virtually ground to a halt in 1899 following the introduction of a total ban on the hunting of kangaroos in the south in an effort to save them from total extinction. * Aborigines were permitted to continue to hunt them for food, and kangaroo meat remained a basic part of their diet while the skins, rather than being discarded, were often sewn together into large warm rugs. ** A few Aborigines also found work with those white hunters licensed to hunt kangaroos for their skins, while others were reported to have continued hunting illegally. Although this was a precarious living and those who were caught faced heavy fines and even imprisonment, *** the continued demand for skins warranted the risk and Aborigines had the advantage of being able to hunt in areas which were inaccessible to the police.

The major focus of commercial hunting from the turn of the century was possum trapping. The increased demand for possum fur in the fashion houses of the world from the turn of the century


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* The 1892 Games Act (55 Vict. No. 36) empowered the Governor to proclaim closed seasons for species of native fauna and to declare native fauna reserves.

** See oral accounts in Appendix I for descriptions of techniques of rug making. These methods closely resemble those used in making buka, the kangaroo cloaks traditionally worn by Aborigines in the south.

*** Under the 1892 Games Act persons found killing or harming particular native fauna in a closed season or on a reserve were to forefeit their weapons and pay a fine of up to £5 and 10/- for each animal injured or killed. Persons who refused to cooperate when apprehended faced an additional maximum fine of £10. In 1900 the fine for each animal was increased to £1 (64 Vict. No. 7). In 1907 the fine for injuring or killing protected animals was increased to £20 for first offences with a maximum fine of £100 or six months' imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for subsequent offences (7 Edw. No. 18).

**** 1900 marked a major turning point for furs and furriers as furs became synonomous with high fashion. Previously used mainly as lining and for small fashion accessories such as muff's and neck pieces, furs were increasingly used in full-length coats and capes for day and evening wear and for ostentatious fashion (contd. over)
Pegging out Kangaroo Skins, n.d.
built the possum skin trade into an important export industry in Western Australia. In 1904 the export value of skins and hides (of which possum skins formed a major part) was £126,272, ranking fifth in the state's major exports. In 1906 alone, over four million possum skins were exported. Depending on the type and quality of the skins, trappers could earn between 15/- and 16/9d for a dozen skins and this assured Aboriginal hunters of a comfortable living during the winter trapping season. In 1910 the Broomehill police told the Aborigines Department that local Aboriginal hunters were "better off then a lot of the white settlers" and that they always had "two or three sulkys which they drive around in". Inexpensive snares of wood and wire were used for trapping possums, and the skins were treated by scraping them with pieces of broken glass or stone and soaking them in tanning solutions made from red gum or mallet bark and then pegging them out to dry. The possum meat was stewed up in a camp oven or thrown onto the ashes to cook while the skins were sold to store-keepers in town or to local settlers. Some Aborigines sold the skins to licensed buyers at recognised rendezvous in the bush. One such meeting place was on the Yerimunup River on land owned by the Warburton family where local Aborigines had a

*** (cont'd.)

accessories such as shoulder capes, trims, large muffs and neck pieces. The fur of the brushtail possum found in the southwest and in other parts of Australia became one of the best known possum skins on the world market. Shorn and dyed it was sold as skunk, beaver or Adelaide chinchilla and was used in muffs, trimmings, and long coats and capes for evening wear (Carter, 1977).

* The value of the possum fur trade led to a number of entrepreneurs considering buying up land simply for the value of the possums on it, while others contemplated establishing possum farms (PD 52, 1915: 1653).

** For descriptions of possum traps see Appendix I.
permanent camp of *mia mias* and, after selling the skins to the buyer, they would often stay in the company of other families before going back into the bush.\(^{35}\)

From 1906 the Aborigines' hunting economy was increasingly threatened by a range of factors. As has been discussed, from this time police in the south strictly regulated the use of guns by Aborigines under the provisions of the 1905 Aborigines Act in an effort to stamp out any illegal hunting of kangaroos. They argued that Aborigines could survive without guns as work was plentiful, possums provided an abundant alternative source of meat, and they could use their dogs to hunt just as easily. However, the continuing scarcity of kangaroos (brought about largely by increased hunting by the new white settlers) made hunting without a gun difficult, and there were several complaints from Aborigines in the south that the actions of the police in confiscating their guns and refusing to issue licences were seriously affecting their livelihood. Although some Aborigines responded by devising hiding places in the bush for their guns, most were obliged to rely entirely on their dogs in hunting kangaroos.

There were growing complaints from white settlers about Aborigines' dogs which they alleged were worrying stock and spreading disease and they pressured the police to strictly control the number of dogs in the camps and to shoot any suspected of attacks on stock. The police responded by using their powers under the 1903 Dog Act.\(^*\)

\(^*\) Under the Dog Act of 1903 (3 Edw. VII, No. 6), any adult Aboriginal male was permitted to keep one unregistered male dog on the condition that the dog was kept free from disease. However, any diseased dogs could be destroyed on the order of a Justice of the Peace, and when the number of unregistered dogs found in the possession of a group of Aborigines exceeded the number of adult male Aborigines in the party, the police were authorised to shoot the excess dogs on the spot.
indiscriminately and without thought for the possible economic hardship for their owners. In 1907 James Yombich Kickett informed the Aborigines Department that following an attack on sheep in the Beverley district, the police had gone to his camp and in his absence shot his three hunting dogs. He maintained that his dogs were not involved in the attack and that the action of the police had severely affected his ability to earn a living. Some settlers took the law into their own hands, and in 1910 E. Corbett of Boyanup poisoned two dogs he suspected of killing his nine imported merino ewes and then demanded compensation from the Aborigines Department. The Aborigines tried to save their dogs from the police by hiding them in the bush and Tom Bennell recalls that

When the dogs got too many the policeman
used to go round and shoot some of them.
And they know when the manitch [policeman]
is coming and they'd go bush. The old
Nyungars would be sitting in the bush with
all their dogs watching. They used to say
manitch worra. That means no good policeman.

Settlers were also increasingly preventing Aborigines from hunting on their land and in 1908 William Hart, a farm labourer with the Lavender family of Williams and spokesman for the local Aborigines, informed the Department that as a result of the actions of settlers in the Williams district many Aborigines were starving. The police constable at Williams reported that the settlers objected to Aborigines hunting on their land because they left gates open and damaged fences and he added that, although he did not "know these natives well" he had "ascertained" that they were "a good deal of annoyance to the settlers" and that most of the money they earned was "spent on drink". Not surprisingly, Hart's complaint had little effect and in 1912 he wrote to the Minister for Lands requesting
a licence to hunt game in all seasons wherever he chose. Although he was issued with a document to this effect by the Aborigines Department, it is unlikely that it had any effect. Some settlers accused Aborigines of hunting for kangaroo skins illegally with the deliberate intention of having them removed from the district. In 1915 Messrs Wade and Henderson of Mogumber complained to the local police that Aborigines camped at the 37-mile post between Toodyay and New Norcia were hunting and selling kangaroo skins. However, police investigating the matter concluded that the allegations were false and the men had "a grievance against blacks" and wanted them removed from the district "at any price".

The major blow to hunting came in 1910 when a total ban was placed on the hunting of possums in the south of the state. A decline in the number of possums had been noted from the middle of the decade, and in 1906 Thomas Muir of Deeside informed the Aborigines Department that over-killing of possums by white hunters in the Bridgetown and Manjimup districts was depleting the possum population. Other centres reported that widespread ring-barking and clearing was seriously affecting numbers of possums, and police at Kojonup and Meckering stated that an introduced disease was wiping out possums in their districts. This ban meant the end of the possum skin trade and, while Aborigines were permitted to hunt possums for their meat, they lost this valuable source of income. Although trapping for skins by licensed trappers was permitted from 1914, the introduction of fees for licences and steep royalties for skins,

* In debate in Parliament in 1913 it was claimed that possum trappers were receiving only 7d for each possum skin on which they were obliged to pay a royalty of 3d (FD, 50, 1913).
combined with a drop in prices paid for skins following the decreased demand during the war years, made possum trapping a much less profitable undertaking. It was not until the 1920s with a growing world market for possum fur that a number of Aboriginal families in the south again took up trapping as a commercial enterprise.

The ban brought considerable hardships for Aborigines in the south, particularly those depending entirely on hunting for their livelihood. They were left in a precarious situation, described by the Narrogin police in their annual report to the Aborigines Department in 1911:

Since settlement has gone on so quickly the people are erecting fences and there is no employment for [Aborigines] shepherding. Since the close season for possums they have been doing a little mallet bark stripping but this is now over until next year. Their principal means of existence was opossum hunting, the flesh being used for food and skins sold to purchase other items.46

Aborigines in several districts were reported to be starving46 and many packed up and moved to areas where they hoped to find employment and where they had relatives to support them until they found work. In 1910 Thomas Muir informed the Aborigines Department that Aborigines from the Frankland River district were moving onto his land47 while others were reported to be moving from Manjimup to Busselton in search of work.48 In 1912 the Kojonup police reported that local Aborigines were leaving the district and moving across to the Great Southern line while the Wagin police stated that local Aborigines were moving south to Katanning to find employment.49 In the same year Aborigines like those at Narrogin, who had turned to mallet bark stripping, lost this source of income when the government introduced restrictions in an effort to save the trees from extinction.50
The Collard family collecting mallet bark in the Brookton district, n.d.
Aboriginal Farmers

Many Aborigines showed an early positive response to the opportunities created by agricultural development and a good number were as keen as the new white settlers to establish their own farms. However, a combination of factors prevented them from establishing themselves successfully on the land, and by 1914 most of the farming blocks granted to Aborigines had been resumed.

There were three avenues of land ownership open to Aborigines early this century: under the 1898 Lands Act any "aboriginal native or descendant of any aboriginal native" could be granted or leased up to 200 acres of land under terms and conditions laid down by the Governor and there were no legal impediments to their being granted free Homestead Blocks of up to 160 acres or Conditional Purchase Blocks. The special provision for grants of land to Aborigines was first introduced in the 1887 Lands Regulations, however, in introducing this provision the government appears to have had no clear-cut policy on the role of Aborigines in land development. It certainly had no intention of granting Aborigines full ownership of these blocks and John Forrest, who was responsible for drawing up the Regulations, stated in the Legislative Council in 1886 that the clause was intended merely to allow the Governor to "give away the land" and that it was not intended that Aborigines should hold land under the Regulations. The Acting Attorney General, S. Burt, added in support of Forrest that 'a native...could hardly be allowed to come under the transfer clause".51 It is likely that the government envisaged the development of Aboriginal farming settlements supervised and assisted by missionary bodies, along the lines of New Norcia, whose encouragement of Aboriginal farming attracted
considerable favourable comment during the 1880s.* In practice this failed to eventuate and, as will be discussed, blocks were granted to individual Aborigines who were left to struggle on their own with the financial difficulties imposed by the conditions under which the land was granted. It is also probable that the government did not envisage that Aborigines would apply for land under the other two avenues open to all prospective land owners; nevertheless a number managed to get land as Homestead Blocks and/or Conditional Purchase Blocks, particularly during the 1890s, at the same time gaining access to financial assistance from the government and private lending institutions.

Applications for land were received by the Lands Department from as early as 1888, however the number of applications increased significantly from the turn of the century, and in 1906 alone twelve were received by the Lands Department. Most applied on their own initiative, following the example of other farmers, while others were encouraged in their endeavours by missionaries, employers or well-meaning government officers who either applied on their behalf or enclosed a note supporting their application. The applicants were mature, married men with young families and considerable experience on the land. Most were workers made redundant by the decline of the pastoral industry in the south and a significant proportion were educated men from New Norcia. Like many whites they

* Aborigines at New Norcia were trained in farming skills and encouraged to farm their own small blocks of mission land with assistance in the form of equipment, seed for their first crop, advice and labour (Russo, 1980). From its inception in the 1860s this project received very favourable press coverage and there was considerable community support for its aims of establishing Aborigines as small-scale farmers. During the 1880s several prominent citizens, including the Governor of Western Australia (1883-1889), Governor Broome, advocated the establishment of further mission supervised farming settlements and it is likely that their views influenced Forrest in framing the 1887 Regulations.
had the incentive of economic independence, finding land selection preferable to wage employment or unemployment (an applicant from Norseman stated that he wanted a farm because he was "tired of white men who forgot to pay him wages").\textsuperscript{52} Generally they applied for blocks on the basis of their farming potential and they invariably had some association through traditional ties or long term residence with the district in which the blocks were located. 

The attitude of the wider community to Aboriginal farming was generally pessimistic and was typified in the comment by the Minister for Lands in 1894 that the idea was "useless and never likely to succeed" as it was "not in them".\textsuperscript{54} * Similarly, a settler in the Toodyay district told the local police in 1903 that Aboriginal farming was merely an "excuse" for "harbouring" large numbers of relatives on the blocks of land.\textsuperscript{54} Chief Protector Prinsep was an exception: he felt that there was some hope of Aborigines (particularly those with a mission educated background) succeeding on their farms and saw this as an important way of bringing them into the wider community.\textsuperscript{55} Despite the general pessimism, while there were still large areas of unalienated land in the south, Lands Department officers were prepared to let the Aborigines "have a go" and at least sixteen blocks of between one and two hundred acres were granted to Aborigines between 1900 and 1914.\textsuperscript{**} An unknown but certainly small number were granted Homestead and/or Conditional Purchase Blocks

\* Barwick (1972), in her account of the Aboriginal farming settlements at Coranderrk and Cumeroogunga in Victoria during the nineteenth century, points out that such attitudes persist today. Descendants of Aborigines who pioneered farming on these settlements were told by policy makers in the 1960s that "all previous experiments" had "entirely failed" since Aborigines were "not agriculturalists by inclination" (ibid: 12).

\** For details on the gazettling of these blocks see Appendix II.
during the same period, presumably having failed to be detected as Aborigines by the Lands Department. Most blocks were located on fair quality land in the major areas of agricultural development (the Midlands, Avon and Great Southern districts), while a small number were situated on the coastal strip south of Bunbury. In granting blocks to Aborigines the Lands Department followed a precedent laid down in 1889 of granting the blocks under reserve conditions and also followed the recommendation of the Commissioner for Crown Lands in 1895 that reserve holders be required to carry out improvements to their blocks or face having them reduced in area or cancelled. The reserve holders were subject to the terms of occupancy for Homestead Blocks: within two years of taking up their blocks they were to erect a farm house valued at £30 and complete clearing to the value of £30 or have an equivalent area under crop; within five years they were to fence in a quarter of their block and within seven years the entire block was to be fenced.

The conditions under which the blocks were granted created insurmountable financial difficulties for Aboriginal farmers and it was the system of land tenure and the conditions of occupancy rather than the effects of drought (1911 and 1914), lack of employment or the pressure of kinship obligations, as suggested by Biskup (1973) and Bolton (1981), which proved the major barrier to Aborigines

* It appears that only one individual identified as an Aboriginal by the Lands Department was granted land under Conditional Purchase and Homestead Block conditions from the turn of the century. In 1904 Johnny Dangin, owner of a Homestead block in the Greenhills district near York, was granted an adjoining block under Conditional Purchase conditions (AP/782/1912). This was probably in recognition of the work he had already done on his original block. On the other hand, an application from Tommy Moichan (Moikan) from the York district in 1902 for a Conditional Purchase Block was rejected and he was granted a reserve block instead (York Police Station, Letter Book, 7/4/1902 - 24/3/1903: 186-7).
succeeding on the land. These conditions made government officials' pessimism about Aborigines becoming "economic men"* into a self-fulfilling prophecy. The reserves could be resumed by the Governor at any time and the reserve holders had no rights to their blocks other than for the purposes of residence and cultivation. Without title to the land or security of tenure it was impossible for them to offer their blocks as security to banks which otherwise may have been willing to lend them capital. Thus they were unable to get the finance to develop their blocks. Some government officers were aware of this problem. The Commissioner of Crown Lands wrote in 1898 that there was "not the remotest chance of the Blackfellow doing anything with the land" and he asked "what is the use of land without money?" 57 The Chief Protector echoed his sentiments in 1912 adding that even the Agricultural Bank refused to extend credit to the reserve farmers. 58 However, despite the generous measures introduced by the government to assist white farmers to establish their farms, nothing was done to provide Aborigines with additional assistance.

The only way that Aborigines could obtain money to finance the development of their farms was through casual and seasonal work. The money they earned had to be divided between providing for their families and developing their farms and, as a result, the amount of capital they were able to accumulate was minimal. In addition, they were obliged to spend time working for others when they needed to tend their own land to meet the terms of occupancy. John Burton, a former resident of New Norcia Mission, whose son had a farming block in the Catabody district told the Aborigines Department in 1912 that his family could not "get on with the land...at once" like local white farmers because they had to "go out to work for a while

* This term is borrowed from Barwick (1972).
and come back and come back". The Aboriginal farmers' absence from their blocks while working for other farmers served to reinforce white officials' expectations that they would not work the land. In 1907 the protector at New Norcia reported to the Department that an Aboriginal farmer from the Catabody district was not on his land but was out working in the district and that in his opinion the man "would never make a farmer or a work husband and he would be much safer working for someone else". Pechelle, the Department's clerk, replied "It is as I thought [he] will never do much work either on his own land or anyone else's". The fact that the reserves could be resumed at any time by the Governor and that there was no guarantee that they would be transferred to the heirs of the reserve holder on his death created an additional insecurity and acted as a dis-incentive to work the land. John Blurton made this point in a further letter to the Department in 1913 when he stated that "the reason why we do nothing on [the block] someone said that it don't belong to us that why we do nothing on it". The maximum size of two hundred acres for the reserve farms was also a major disability for the Aboriginal farmers as it was estimated by the Agricultural Bank in 1907 that at least 640 acres of land was required to develop an economically viable farm in the wheat belt.

Some Aborigines applied to the Department for assistance in kind (tools, fencing wire, corrugated iron) in developing their farms. Lukey Moody (Mourdey), holder of a reserve block in the Catabody district, wrote to the Department requesting assistance because he had ...

...no means to start the farm. I beg to you to ask if you will be kindly enuff to help me. To tell you the Truth I have no opportunity of making a start, Because I have a wife and three children to provide for it take me all my time to do so I ask you to help me in this way with galvanise tin and wire for fences and Tools and some Rasion."
The Department refused to assist him and was similarly uncooperative with those who had already shown initiative in working the land. In 1906 William Ryder wrote to the Department requesting assistance with fencing wire. He had erected wooden fences on his property but they were knocked down by horses and pigs from a neighbouring farm which then destroyed all his crops. When he earned some money working at New Norcia, this went to support his wife and five children and he was unable to pay for the necessary fencing wire. 64 Once again the Department refused assistance. The one exception was Benedict Cooper. He had a block at Wyening and by 1905 had fifteen acres under crop, fifty cleared and ready for ploughing and posts ready for one hundred chains of fencing. His application for fencing wire was accompanied by a recommendation from the New Norcia mission authorities and, most importantly, his local member of Parliament, and the Department agreed to supply the one and a half tons of wire requested. 65 As a result of this assistance Cooper was still farming his block in 1914.*

Although several Aboriginal farmers made considerable improvements to their blocks, their lack of capital and outside work commitments prevented them from meeting the conditions of occupancy within the specified period. As early as 1910, twelve blocks had already been cancelled and the land resumed by the Lands Department. ** While

* In 1914 Cooper and his wife applied for the Old Age Pension but their application was refused on the grounds that they were classified as 'Aborigines' under the 1905 Aborigines Act. This created a major financial difficulty for the elderly couple who had no children living with them to help work the farm and it appears that they lost the land soon after (AF/989/1911).

** It is not clear whether the Lands Department went through the procedure of cancelling all reserves granted. The records indicate that some were not cancelled until much later in time while others may not have been cancelled at all.
the Lands Department had inspectors checking that all farmers were making the required improvements to their land, it appears that white farmers on land adjoining some of the Aboriginal blocks deliberately drew attention to the lack of improvements in order to gain possession of the land. John Blurton told the Department in 1912 that farmers wanted to "do [him] out of this block of land...because they want the Land themselves", while Charles Ponan, who had a block in the Catabody district, was told by his white neighbours that it "was no use" for him to work his block as another farmer had applied for it. He subsequently learnt that his block had been cancelled.

Some Aborigines strongly objected to losing their farms, particularly when they were offered no compensation for the improvements they had made to the land.* Charles Ponan wrote an angry letter to the Department in 1907 after learning of the cancellation of his block:

> You say it has been cancelled through non-fulfilment of the labour conditions. No Sir I can prove that I had certain improvements effected here long before 6th May last. Therefore if I am to lose the land I expect payment for the twenty acres which I have partly cleared there also twenty fruit trees growing well, planted over twelve months ago, also some little water holes there, as I do not consider it fair to take it like this after all I have done. Now Sir I trust you will try to get me the land or else payment for what I have done thereon.

Ponan had done sufficient work on his block to influence the Lands Department to reverse its decision and the reserve was re-declared in his name in the same year. However, the objections of other

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* In 1912 Chief Protector Gale advised the Lands Department that Aborigines should receive some compensation for work done on the land when their reserves were cancelled, however his proposal appears to have been rejected (AF/636/1912).
farmers were rejected and they were obliged to leave their blocks, while others, desperate to make ends meet and depressed by their downhill battle on the land, simply walked off their blocks before they were even cancelled.

Meanwhile, the thirteen or so Aborigines granted Conditional Purchase and Homestead Blocks during the 1890s were proving successful farmers. They were granted title to their blocks on the completion of the necessary improvements (and in the case of Conditional Purchase Blocks, payments), and like the new white settlers were able to obtain credit from the Agricultural Bank and other institutions to finance the development of their farms. While it is impossible to provide much information on these farmers as many were not identified as Aborigines in the records, the available details indicate the degree of success of their farming ventures. Robert Ugle had 260 acres in the Pingelly district under Homestead Block and Conditional Purchase conditions, and a £100 mortgage with the Agricultural Bank. By 1909 all the necessary improvements had been made to the land and the title for the block transferred to his name. In 1905 Thomas Kickett owned 450 acres in the Avon district mortgaged to the Warwick Brothers of York for £300, and over the next four years increased his holdings to 648 acres. In 1909 he sold the land for £950 and reinvested his money in three Conditional Purchase Blocks which were mortgaged to the Agricultural Bank. Fred Garlett had 360 acres near Pingelly mortgaged to the Agricultural Bank for £100 and by 1912 had completed most of the conditions of occupancy, while William Harris was running a successful farm in the Morawa district.

The Agricultural Bank was sometimes cautious about lending money to Aboriginal farmers. Johnny Dangin had land in the York district under Homestead Block and Conditional Purchase conditions and in
1907 applied to the Bank for a mortgage of £100 to complete further improvements on his land. The bank inspector advised that "a loan to a native [would] probably be a very unsatisfactory business" and the Managing Trustee, while willing to lend the money to Dangin on the grounds that he may prove to be a "rara avis" in successfully working the land, made the loan conditional on the money being issued to Dangin as required by a local farmer.  

Ugle, Dangin and Kickett lost their farms before the outbreak of war in 1914. Ugle and Dangin both died in 1909 and, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, the Aborigines Department supervised the administration of their estates, and the small sum of money remaining after the payment of outstanding debts was retained by the Department to pay for rations for their families. Thomas Kickett lost his farm in 1913 after the local storekeeper at Dangin, J.R. White, secured the property under dubious financial dealings to cover a debt owed to him by Kickett.  

* In 1913 Thomas Kickett had an outstanding debt of £128 with White, and when White summoned him for non-payment of the debt Kickett agreed to mortgage his property to White for £125 at 10% interest. White then demanded that Kickett pay the debt and when he failed to do so he informed Kickett that he intended to put his land on the market. Meanwhile Kickett transferred the land to his son John Kickett who took out a £130 mortgage with the Agricultural Bank to liquidate the debt. However, before they received the money (the Kicketts claimed that White, who also ran the post office from his store, had opened the letter and retained it) White sold the land. The purchaser was White's younger brother, who was an assistant in the store, and he purchased the block for £165 although it was valued at £500. Kickett was then given fourteen days to move off the land. At the insistence of the Kickett family the Department instructed E.H. Neville, solicitor of Beverley, to look into the matter. Neville found that White had conducted a "very distasteful transaction" and that by using his brother as a "dummy" buyer he had succeeded in obtaining the land at "a great deal below its market value". He also commented on the inordinately high level of interest charged by White on the mortgage. Nevertheless, Neville concluded that although it was a "shady" operation, it was to all appearances legal and he recommended against legal action as the case would probably be unsuccessful in court and Kickett, in his opinion, would make a "poor showing in the witness box". On behalf of his father, John Kickett continued to pressure the Department to take legal action but it refused to take the matter any further (CS/2729/1921).
farm when he died in 1931, but the fate of the other farmers is not certain. It is likely that some lost their land during the droughts of 1911 and 1914, while some may have found it difficult to continue on the land as opportunities in rural employment decreased from 1911. The descendants of some Aboriginal farmers believe that they were "tricked" out of the land by local white farmers or, unable to keep up with the necessary payments, they simply walked off the land. One man recalls that his grandfather had been unable to maintain family obligations requiring him to travel regularly from Quairading to Katanning and so sold off his land.  

Aboriginal Rural Workers

From the turn of the century increasing numbers of Aborigines joined the rural workforce. The most common employment offered to them was land clearing and seasonal farm work by the former pastoralists, the more prosperous new settlers, and absentee landowners. A few also found employment on the railway and road building programmes. However, Aborigines had to compete with white labourers and farmers of limited means in finding work and they faced the preferences of established employers for white workers and the stereotyped attitudes of many of the new employers who believed that Aborigines were incapable of sustained and productive work. Nevertheless, while economic conditions remained favourable and there was a sustained need for workers, Aborigines were able to find regular employment and during this period they played an important and largely unrecognised role in the development of the wheat belt.

Most Aborigines worked in loosely defined areas which they referred to as "runs"* and these were an important feature of

* The word "run" was originally used to refer to pastoral leases on the stations.
Aboriginal Rural Workers, Williams District, n.d.
Aboriginal life early this century. Aborigines were thoroughly familiar with the country and camping places in their run and they often had ties of traditional ownership with the area. They built up contacts with a number of employers in their runs who employed them on a regular basis and in some cases allowed them to camp on their land. There were usually strong kinship ties between Aboriginal families living in a run and they visited each other frequently, joined together to do contract work and provided support for each other during hard times. Outside the run these interdependent relationships were more tenuous and life more precarious. Norman Yarran, from Quairading, recalls that his father's run was around Dangin, Quairading and Mount Stirling, and "he could always get work around these places", while Tom Bennell recalls that his uncle Norman Bennell's "great run" was the Brookton district. "Everyone knew him around Brookton and he could get work anywhere, there, all the white people knew him."

Most Aborigines built up a seasonal round of work based on clearing, casual work on the wheat farms and shearing, and between and during jobs they supplemented their incomes by hunting for skins and mallet bark stripping, while some of the women took on domestic work with farmers' wives or in town. They frequently worked in groups based on family ties with several men from related families or even entire families going out to work together. There were usually one or two men in each run who organised contracts with local employers and then built up teams of workers, supervised them while they were working, and distributed the payments when the contract was finished.

Clearing, a major source of employment for Aborigines during this period, was hard work. The men would
Clearing, Mount Barker, c. 1910
...chop all the big trees down, roll the logs together, clear the big stumps and roll the big logs on top of them, and there'd be someone picking up and packing all the sticks. About five o'clock you'd light all the logs. Let them all burn. Then we'd have our tea and about half past seven we'd go back to stack all the ends in to burn out. The next morning it's all burnt up clear, might have just an odd piece to stoke up.

Sometimes the big timber was ring-barked and left to dry out for burning after a year or two and workers who wanted the job of burning off later left a "sub" (usually part of their payment for the original ring-barking contract) with the farmer to be paid on completion of the burn. All clearers developed their own techniques for dealing with certain types of timber and for burning off and they all aimed at having "a good burn". In this way they avoided the back-breaking chore of restacking partly burned timber while at the same time they built up a reputation for their clearing skills and were assured of finding other contracts. Depending on the type of timber and the denseness of the bush, clearing paid between 12/6 and £3 an acre. There was often little money left after the payment for the contract had been distributed amongst the workers and they had paid for their stores and equipment. Tom Bennell recalls:

There might be two or three men on the team and they got to live on that, got to get so much each, be paid so much each. You got to get your flour, tea, sugar, tea out of that. You could always get some bush tucker, you were never short of meat. Sometimes you'd buy it off the coockies. Some of the blokes had their families to support too. Well you'd be lucky to have ten bob left when you finished.

In addition to clearing, Aborigines took on contracts stump pulling, root picking,* eradicating noxious weeds (referred to locally as

* Stump pulling and root picking involved removing the large stumps and roots left in the ground after the timber was cut down and burned off.
Aboriginal, Joe Nettup (centre) with winning entry at the Perth Royal Show, n.d.
poison grubbing) and stone picking, all of which had to be done to make the land suitable for ploughing and cultivation. Stone picking paid around £3 a week and it was back-breaking work. At Jerramungup workers were issued with leather aprons with large pouches and they moved across the fields filling the pouches with stones and then emptying them into a central pile. Aborigines also took out contracts cutting fence posts and erecting fences for farmers. Again this was hard work which brought in little money. Tom Bennell recalls that farmers in his district paid around eight shillings for one hundred posts cut. This was a good day's hard work and workers were required to provide their own axes at a cost of around ten shillings each.

Shearing was another important source of income. Established settlers in the Toodyay Valley and on the margins of the wheat belt continued to run fairly large flocks of sheep while in the wheat belt proper a number of more prosperous farmers ran flocks of up to one hundred sheep. The Aborigines were paid between 25/- and £3 per hundred sheep, depending on the size of the flock (the larger the number of sheep the lower the price paid). The men used blade shears and most did between twenty and sixty a day, although some families such as the Ugles had the reputation of being "gun" shearers and they sheared up to a hundred a day. While some Aboriginal shearers travelled around the farms in small teams of two or three, leaving their families behind at a central camp, others took their families with them. During the shearing season Lilly Hayward's mother worked as a shed hand for the Warburtons of Balgarrup where men from the Smith, Eades, Krackouer and Punch families sheared each year. They camped in their own tents and mia mia in five or six family groups about half a mile from the homestead.
Carting Hay, Kellerberrin District, n.d.

Men with Wheat Bags, Kellerberrin, n.d.
Humphries travelled with his father's team and he recalls standing next to his father in the shearing shed learning how to shear:

I'd be on the side there with a little pair of shears and he'd say to me "Look don't you cut that sheep. But you do it carefully." And he'd strap it up for me, you know so it can't kick. There I'd be goin' for my life.

The Aborigines also found casual work crutching sheep and assisting in feeding and added to their incomes by collecting and selling dead wool.

As farms were established there was a demand for seasonal workers in hay and wheat production on the larger properties. Some Aborigines drove teams of horses, ploughing the land in preparation for seeding during the first winter rains. Team driving was hard work and the men started early in the morning, brushing the horses and yoking them up. Tom Bennell recalls that some mornings the "frost'd be hanging on the chains when you chained the horses on...Then you'd plough to sunset". This usually brought in £1 a week plus food. When it was finished, farmers would book up workers for the harvest season to do hay stacking and carting, pitching and sewing up bags of wheat. Pitching hay paid five shillings a day while bag sewing brought in between six shillings and 12/6d per hundred bags.

Aboriginal women employed in domestic work did mainly washing and ironing and scrubbing and polishing floors, and they were paid between five shillings a day and five shillings a week, depending on the "generosity" of their employer. However, many of the women preferred working on contracts alongside their men rather than doing housework under the eagle eye of white mistresses.

Some families appear to have made a fair living from rural work and the Chief Protector described Aboriginal shearsers in the Toodyay
Aboriginal Woman Domestic
district in 1905 as "prosperous and contented" with their lot. In 1910 the policeman at Greenhills in the York district reported that local Aborigines were "more frugal than the white labourers and certainly more comfortable" and attributed this "solely to their own efforts". However contract and seasonal employment left the Aborigines vulnerable to the whims of the employers and to sudden changes in the rural economy. It also left them unemployed for long periods of time and this, together with their low wages, prevented them from accumulating any capital or property apart from a horse and cart or sulky, tents and basic camping equipment.

**Deteriorating Economic Conditions for Aborigines**

The number of Aborigines seeking rural employment increased from 1910 as Aborigines were forced out of their hunting occupations and off their farms. They found themselves competing for work on a shrinking and over-pressed labour market. Large areas of the wheat belt were already cleared and under-crop and available work was taken up by white farmers seeking an extra income, white labourers, immigrants who continued to arrive from Britain, and by those Aborigines with experience in rural work and contacts with local employers. At the same time employment opportunities for all Aborigines in the south began to contract due to the combined effects of drought conditions in the wheat belt and a surge of union activity directed against the employment of Aborigines. The Aborigines' economic difficulties were further exacerbated by the significant increase in their own population from the turn of the century. In 1911 the eastern and northern wheat belt experienced drought conditions and in 1914 the rains failed throughout the wheat
Widespread disaster was only averted by the introduction of special assistance programmes funded by the state government. Under these difficult conditions agricultural expansion ground to a halt. Few farmers could afford to employ outside labour, while many farmers who considered themselves established on the land were forced back into the rural labour market. They further swelled the ranks of those seeking casual rural work and this in turn served to reduce the Aborigines' chances of finding employment.

The Aborigines' ability to compete in this limited rural labour market was also affected by growing trade union activity following the election of the Scaddan Labor government in 1911. Prior to this time union opposition to the employment of Aborigines in the south appears to have been limited to the non-rural sector. For example, in 1907, the Resident Magistrate at Greenbushes informed the Department that he was unable to place an Aboriginal man in employment in the Collie coal mines because "labour with a big L forbids". However, there were no similar recorded complaints about Aboriginal rural workers. With the exception of shearing, rural contract and labouring work appears to have continued regardless of the unions prior to 1911. However, this was probably related to the difficulty of organising scattered casual workers, while many rural workers were farmers who saw themselves as men of the land earning an extra income to further the development of their farms, rather than as permanent residents.

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* The Northam district for example received only 5½" of rain between January and September in 1914, compared to 13" for the same period in 1913 (Garden, 1979).

** In 1911 the state government provided assistance in the form of grants of fertiliser, seed and the deferment of debt repayments and rent instalments to the Agricultural Bank. In 1914 the government established the Industries Assistance Board to assist farmers in meeting a range of financial commitments from medical to store accounts (Glynn, 1975).
rural workers. As has been discussed, the major impediments to employment for Aborigines at this time were employer preference for white workers and the stereotyped attitudes of many employers to Aboriginal workers. While the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) was actively involved in organising shearsers in the south prior to 1911, their complaints about Aboriginal shearsers were limited to the north and in 1908 they raised strong objections to the employment of ten Aboriginal shearsers on Noonkanbah Station in the Kimberleys. In the south some Aboriginal shearsers were even being signed up as members of the AWU. This difference in attitude was probably related to the fact that Aboriginal shearsers in the south were paid in cash for their work, unlike the north where they were paid in kind. While it is not clear whether Aborigines in the south were paid at the same rates as white shearsers, the objections of an employer in 1911 to union involvement with Aboriginal shearsers in his employ suggest that they were not. He wrote to the Department inquiring whether Aborigines understood "anything about Unionism", and accused the AWU of "extracting money" from the Aborigines "under false pretences". AWU officials replied that they were not aware that any Aborigines had joined the Union, adding that there was nothing in their rules to prevent them from doing so, however.

Union activity throughout the state was stimulated by the election of the Scaddan Labor government and, through a "blend of humanitarianism, racial prejudice and the fear of cheap competition", unionists began to agitate for the removal of Aborigines from the workforce. While their objections were largely directed against the "unpaid slavery" of Aborigines in the pastoral industry in the north, complaints were also made about the employment of Aborigines to the detriment of white workers in the south. A correspondent
to the *Sunday Times* in 1911 objected to the employment of Aboriginal women in rural work in the Toodyay district, claiming that it was "against the spirit of the Aborigines Act that native - and female natives at that - should be hired out to take the place of the ordinary labourer". In 1912 the State Executive of the Australian Labor Party voted to ban the employment of Aborigines on private property and in the following year the Metropolitan Council of the Australian Labor Federation (ALF) presented a statement to the Colonial Secretary demanding the complete segregation of all Aborigines on state-owned farms and the total abolition of private employment of Aborigines. The views of the members of the Labor government were expressed during debate on the 1912 Shearers, Shed Hands and Agricultural Labourers Accommodation Bill which was intended to make provision for the "sufficient and proper" accommodation of rural workers by employers. Some members of the Labor government joined with the pastoralists in opposing a proposal to amend the Bill to include Aborigines in the definition of "labourer" contained in the Bill. While the pastoralists objected on the grounds of the extra expense that this would involve for employers of Aborigines, the Labor members' objections grew from their concern that the amendment would give the impression of "tacit consent" on the governments' part to the employment of Aborigines in general and as shearers in particular. However, some Labor members argued in support of the amendment and G.J. Foley (Mount Leura) told the House that

...the only way to discourage a man from using black labour and to bring about the supremacy of the white race and the realisation of the White Australian ideal was to make the employer pay for the aboriginal labourer under the same conditions as he paid for white labour.
R.H. Underwood (MLA, Pilbara) recommended that the government support the employment of Aborigines under the same conditions as white workers as "it was better that they should work for their living than that the government should keep them in idleness". The amendment was rejected and at the same time agricultural labourers were also excluded from the provisions of the Bill on the grounds that this would place an "unacceptable" financial burden on the new settlers in the south. Thus employers of Aboriginal shearers and of any agricultural labourers were not obliged to provide even minimal standards of accommodation for their employees. *

In 1913 the Aboriginal spokesman, William Harris, publicly expressed his opinion on the continuing debate on Aboriginal employment and the recommendation of the ALF that all Aborigines be segregated on state-run farms. In an angry letter to the Sunday Times, he described the recommendation as tantamount to "the imprisonment of all the Aborigines" and asked "why take from the Aborigines the right to work for their own living?" He advised that as long as Aborigines were paid a fair wage they should be left alone and suggested that local protectors should ensure that Aboriginal workers were dealt with fairly. 97

The Aborigines' difficulties were compounded by the fact that most wage earners had large numbers of dependants to support. The increase in the birth rate from the 1870s, noted in Chapter One, combined with a decreasing death rate from the turn of the century to produce a significant increase in the Aboriginal population in the south. While there are no separate figures available for the

* The Shearers' Accommodation Act (1912) was not repealed until 1974 and was one of the last discriminatory Acts to be amended in Western Australia (Rowley, 1970).
area, the extent of this increase can be inferred from the 1911 Commonwealth Census which reported that the 'half-caste' population in Western Australia (which was predominantly in the southwest)* had increased from 951 in 1901 to 1475 in 1911, an overall increase of 60 per cent. ** This increase was no doubt related in part to inadequate reportage of pre-1900 population figures. Nevertheless, genealogical records of Aboriginal families for this period show a significant increase in the size of families with ten to fourteen children being quite common. This overall population increase was no doubt related to an initial improvement in Aborigines' living conditions in the south from the turn of the century due to the increased money available to them through rural employment and hunting, and the improved medical services accompanying white settlement in the wheat belt. Studies of nineteenth century Aboriginal populations in other parts of Australia (see, for example, Gale [1960]) suggest that growing immunity to disease would have also played a role in reducing the death rate of the population.

The large number of children, together with the need to assist in the support of elderly and unemployed relatives, placed considerable strain on wage earners. Deteriorating economic conditions from 1910 meant that they found it increasingly difficult to provide for their many dependants and from this time there were growing reports of hardship amongst Aboriginal families in the south. Many

* The 1901 State Census provides separate figures for the 'half-caste' population in the various magisterial districts in the state and it shows that 74 per cent of this population was located in the south.

**This includes genealogical material collected by Aboriginal researchers as part of the South West Aboriginal Studies Project between 1977 and 1979 (this material is housed at the Mount Lawley Campus of the West Australian College of Advanced Education), and my own field research. There are also frequent references to large families in the south during this period in the records of the Aborigines Department. For example, the police constable at Beverley reported in 1911 that a twenty-nine year old woman in his district had eight children aged between eighteen months and thirteen years (AF/479/1911).
turned to the Aborigines Department for assistance. Although there are no available separate figures for rations issued in the south for this period, figures for the state as a whole show a dramatic increase from 996 in 1907 to 3,330 in 1914. It is certain that growing unemployment amongst Aborigines in the south contributed to this increase.

Movement into the Towns

From 1911 there was a marked movement of Aboriginal families out of the bush and into camps on the fringes of wheat belt towns. Prior to this, Aborigines in the wheat belt had shown little interest in camping permanently around towns. Most lived in the bush or camped on farm land and came into town only occasionally to find work, pick up supplies, get medical attention or for entertainment. They usually came in small numbers, camping overnight on vacant blocks or reserved Crown land and then moving back to their camps in the bush. The movement into the town camps from 1911 reflected the Aborigines’ growing difficulty in earning a living on the farms and supporting themselves in the bush and the decreasing availability of camping places due to the rapid clearing of the land. Drought conditions further compounded their problems as available sources of water in the bush dried up and, in addition, several rivers were reported to have turned saline due to the effects of the rapid clearing of the bush. The Department’s practice of issuing rations on a weekly basis from the town police stations meant that the families were obliged to camp near the towns where they also had access to the local water supply and the opportunity to find employment with farmers visiting town to pick up stores. The movement into the towns was also a response

* There were reports from several areas in the south during this period that freshwater streams had turned saline (see, for example, AF/267/1910).
to the increasing government interference in Aboriginal family life through the removal of the children to missions, discussed in the previous chapter, and from 1911 Aboriginal parents in several districts moved into town for the express purpose of enrolling their children in local state schools to avoid having them taken from them. Some parents were also keen for their children to receive the benefits of an education like the white children in their districts.

The towns of Katanning and Moora attracted the largest numbers of Aborigines. Numbers at the Katanning camp increased from around forty in 1911 to two hundred in 1913 while during the same period the Moora camp grew from sixty to 240 inhabitants. There were several reasons why these towns provided a focus for the movement of Aborigines. Bignell (1981) states that the site of Katanning was a traditional meeting place for Aborigines from a wide area in the Great Southern being at the junction of three tribal grounds and having sufficient resources to support large gatherings of people during favourable seasons. From the turn of the century Katanning had an established camping reserve for Aborigines. When Daisy Bates visited the reserve in 1908 she found several families, most of them related by ties of descent or marriage but coming originally from various parts of the Great Southern, reflecting the area's continuing role as a centre for Aborigines from a wide area. The government hospital at Katanning also provided medical services to Aborigines and Bates' field notes suggest that Aborigines came from a wide area to avail themselves of these services. The town was also the centre of a prosperous farming district and the major town in the Great Southern district and, as has been mentioned, from 1910 Aborigines from districts to the north, south and west of the town began moving to Katanning in search of employment. From 1912,
Aborigines were actively encouraged to move into Katanning by Annie Lock, a missionary from the Australian Aborigines Mission (AAM), who established a preaching station at the town camp in September 1912. Five years earlier, Reverend Telfer of the AAM had visited the town camp and met white town residents whom he encouraged to provide assistance to the camp residents. After successfully establishing the Dulhi Gunyah Orphanage in Perth, the AAM missionaries turned their attention to Katanning. Annie Lock, a missionary originally from New South Wales who was appointed as Matron at Dulhi Gunyah in 1910, was transferred to Katanning to establish the AAM there. At a public meeting in Katanning in September 1912 Annie Lock informed Katanning residents that she intended to instruct local Aborigines in religion, hygiene and basic skills such as sewing, and Mr Hansen, spokesman for Aborigines at the camp, told the gathering they hoped Miss Lock would stay and work with them. Some Katanning residents rallied to her support and at the end of the year sufficient donations were received to put on a "gala" Christmas dinner for one hundred Aborigines at the camp, and on Boxing Day town residents and the Aborigines joined together in a day of sports. At the same time the AAM authorities announced their intention to establish a "colony" in the district where Aborigines could settle and support themselves through farming, and they requested the Department to set aside twenty-five acres near Katanning for this purpose. Annie Lock also visited Aboriginal camps in the surrounding district, holding prayer services and encouraging parents to send their children to Katanning to attend school and receive religious instruction. Her interest in the children prompted one Aboriginal woman to comment "You must love us people...it seems funny that a white woman should care for us".
She also sent several orphaned children from the district to Dulhunty Gunyah Orphanage in Perth. However, she frequently encountered strong opposition from the relatives of children, and she recorded in her diary on one occasion after travelling some distance from Katanning by horse and cart to pick up two orphaned children "we tried to get them, but did not succeed".107 From 1914 Katanning was one of two towns in the south providing separate educational facilities for Aboriginal children and this served to attract further Aboriginal families to the town.

Moora was the major town in the Midlands district and provided an alternative centre for Aborigines previously attached to New Norcia where they could get medical attention, rations, stores, find entertainment and take part in local sporting activities. Some of the men were employed at the railway yards in town and on nearby farms. However, few parents appear to have sent their children to the state school and those seeking an education for their children sent them to New Norcia, despite their continuing conflict with the mission authorities. The Moora town camp was located on Midland Railway land just seven hundred yards from the centre of the town.108

The town camps lacked basic amenities such as a water supply and sanitary facilities, and the Aboriginal families were obliged to get water from tanks of neighbouring houses or public water utilities. Those who did not possess portable latrines were obliged to relieve themselves in the bush around the camps. As numbers of Aborigines in the camps increased, Aborigines found it increasingly difficult to maintain levels of hygiene and this, together with their deteriorating diet, led to sickness and even deaths in the camps.
Aborigines and the New Settlers

At the same time as the new settlers established their local communities they built up social barriers to limit contacts with Aborigines in their districts. This reflected their racist attitudes towards Aborigines. Based on ignorance and the racist myths which evolved in white Australia during the nineteenth century, the new settlers' prejudices enshrined a belief in the fundamental superiority of white over black, exemplified in the policy of a "White Australia" which had gained a strong following in the south of the state by the end of the first decade of this century. The new settlers also continued to believe in the ultimate extinction of the Aboriginal race and the so-called "laws" of Social Darwinism. These beliefs were expressed in an editorial in the West Australian in 1912:

"The survival of the fittest" is a primary law of evolution, and no more striking example of its inexorable truth need be looked for than is afforded by the decay and rapid extinction of the Australian aboriginal race which is going on under our very eyes, before the advance of the all-conquering white race....So completely have the blacks retreated before the advance of the whites that in the south west it is comparatively rare to see a single specimen of the native black in the settled district.

At the same time ideas that racial inter-mixture led to "racial contamination" and beliefs in the inherent inferiority of persons of mixed descent were spreading through the white community in the south, fanned by racist editorial comments such as the following which appeared in the Bulletin, the country's foremost nationalistic magazine, in 1901:

If Australia is to be a country fit for our children and their children to live in, we MUST KEEP THE BREED PURE. The half-caste usually inherits the vices of both races and the virtues of neither. Do you want Australia to be a community of mongrels?"
Such beliefs contrasted with the nineteenth century view that persons of mixed Aboriginal and European descent were superior to their Aboriginal forbears and that, being "half-British" they deserved a place, albeit lowly, in the wider community. While some observers were prepared to concede that part-Aborigines were more intelligent because of their "white blood", most looked on this intelligence as "low cunning" and warned against the educated people who "reverted" to "a more evil, because educated, barbarism than before". There was no place for persons of part or full Aboriginal descent in the new "White Australia". Basic to the whole concept was the belief in the need to strictly limit all contacts between black and white through the strict segregation of the races. Regardless of degree of Aboriginality or lifestyle, Aborigines were to be lumped together under the one category and referred to deprecatorily as "black-fellows", "natives", "niggers" and worse, and to be kept strictly separate from the dominant category of "White Australians".

The barriers between whites and Aborigines also reflected the process of group or community formation by the new white settlers in the country towns. On the basis of their racist beliefs and attitudes towards Aborigines, the white settlers used the Aboriginal presence as a kind of catalyst with Aborigines acting as a useful negative definer of what the new communities believed they stood for, for example "cleanliness" and "orderliness" versus "disease" and "dirtiness". Efforts by white residents from 1911 to have Aborigines removed from the towns no doubt served to reinforce white community solidarity and civic consciousness in the towns.*

* A similar process has been described by Reece (1984) in the establishment of Perth during the 1830s.
The social barriers were particularly evident in the country towns. Some had official sanction: as has been discussed, under the 1905 Aborigines Act, police were required to control the entry of Aborigines to towns and to prevent miscegenation and the entry of Aborigines to hotels. However, most of the barriers were unofficial and, while Aborigines were confined to a limited range of poorly paid and back-breaking jobs, they were also discouraged from participating in community organisations and social activities and even from attending church; any socialising with Aborigines was strictly frowned on. The Aborigines were also provided with separate and inferior accommodation at the local hospitals and while they were allowed to make purchases at certain stores they were obliged to consume any refreshments outside. However, the barriers were never total and all employers had some contact with their Aboriginal workers. In some towns Aborigines were allowed to participate in local sporting events, while covert sexual contacts between some white men and Aboriginal women continued in the camps.

While the Aborigines remained scattered in the bush and working on the farms, these barriers had only a minimal impact. Their visits to town were usually brief and outside of the towns they had their own family-based communities for socialising and entertaining. However, Aborigines who over-stepped these barriers frequently found themselves in court. An Aboriginal man who attempted to shake the hand of a white man in Toodyay in 1909 and then swore at him, resisted attempts by the police to take him into custody and he was subsequently sentenced to six months' imprisonment for disorderly conduct, one month for resisting arrest and six months for assaulting a policeman. One other Aboriginal man who touched a white woman on the arm at the beach in Bunbury was charged with assault and
sentenced to six months' hard labour.112

The barriers between white and black meant that the new settlers had little need or opportunity to modify their preconceived notions about Aborigines while their superficial observations often served to reinforce their prejudices. The Aborigines' close involvement with the police in their role as protectors and the Aborigines' special legal disabilities associated them in the settlers' minds with the wrong side of the law and suggested that Aborigines needed these special restraints to keep them in order. The Aborigines' apparent failure on the land together with their deteriorating living standards from the end of the decade contrasted strongly with the progress most white families had achieved, and this was interpreted by the new settlers as proof that Aborigines were inherently "lazy" and "dirty" and incapable of making their way in the wider community. At the same time their often poor levels of health were seen as evidence of their "inherited susceptibility" to disease while those settlers who noticed the growing number of children in the camps attributed this to the Aborigines' "immorality" and "unbridled sexuality" and "promiscuity". Like most "victims", the Aborigines were blamed for their situation. The police insisted in their reports to the Department that work was available for Aborigines but they were too lazy to take it. For example, the constable at Pingelly told the Department in 1910 that he doubted whether a young man from his district would find employment because from his "knowledge of the niggers they [were] too lazy to look for any".113 These stereotyped ideas underlaid the language used to vilify Aborigines in the south during the conflict of the pre-war years.
Conclusion

Socio-economic changes in the inland areas of the south from the turn of the century benefited both established and new white settlers in the area, but had long term adverse consequences for Aborigines already living there. Their economic independence was eroded and they were increasingly confined to competing for employment as contract and seasonal rural workers. At the same time they were denied access to the land and this, together with their deteriorating economic situation from 1911, forced increasing numbers of Aborigines into small camps on the fringes of wheat belt towns. The prejudices of the new settlers towards Aborigines and the social barriers they built up to limit their contacts with Aborigines promoted the development of separate white and Aboriginal social worlds in the south, and while the Aborigines remained scattered in the bush and working in the farms contact between the two remained minimal. This situation was changed by the increasing numbers of Aborigines living permanently in the town camps and this was to lead directly to the outburst of white racism and discriminatory behaviour which characterised relations between Aborigines and whites in the wheat belt towns between 1911 and 1914.
FOOTNOTES - Chapter Four

4. Ibid.
5. Battye, 1912.
10. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
22. New Norcia, 1908.
23. AF/215/1913.
24. Harold Willowy, private communication.
26. AF/473/1911.
27. Ibid.
30. AR/1902.
33. See Appendix I.
34. AF/19/1910.
35. Lilly Hayward, Appendix I, Interview 5.
37. AF/873/1910.
38. Tom Bennell, Appendix I, Interview 2.
39. AF/882/1908.
40. AF/788/1912.
41. AF/1501/1915, 1532/1915.
42. GG, 1910: 1355.
43. A/332/1906.
44. AF/992/1913.
45. AF/75/1911.
46. AF/1664/1911.
47. AF/17/1910.
48. AF/231/1910.
49. AF/75/1911.
50. AF/75/1911; Colebatch, 1929.
51. PD, 2, 1886.
53. LS/1508/1894.
55. AR/1906.
56. LS/2915/1888.
57. LS/2455/1894.
58. AF/636/1912.
59. AF/1626/1912.
60. AF/1038/1911.
61. AF/1626/1912.
63. AF/75/1905.
64. AF/1038/1911.
66. AF/1626/1912.
68. A/157/1907.
69. AF/988/1909.
70. AF/2729/1912.
71. AF/489/1912.
72. AF/762/1912.
73. AF/988/1909; AF/762/1912.
74. CS/2724/1921.
75. Cliff Humphries, Appendix I, Interview 6.
77. Tom Bennell, Appendix I, Interview 2.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Lilly Hayward, Appendix I, Interview 5.
82. Tom Bennell, Appendix I, Interview 2.
84. Lilly Hayward, Appendix I, Interview 5.
85. AR/1905.
86. AR/1910: 20.
89. AF/1597/1911.
91. AF/1030/1911.
93. WA 17/12/1913.
94. PD 28/8/1912.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid: 1380.
98. ST 19/11/1911.
100. AF/1664/1911.
101. AF/1782/1914.
103. Telfer, 1939.
105. AF/2922/1914.
106. Telfer, 1939: 156.
108. CS/213/1921.
110. Quoted from Broome, 1982: 93.
111. Toodyay Police Court, Minutes, 27/8/1909.
112. Bunbury Police Station, Letterbook, 1/10/1910.
113. AF/669/1912.
CHAPTER FIVE

Introduction

The response of white residents to the growing Aboriginal presence in wheat belt towns marked a breakdown in the process of adjustment between Aborigines and the new settlers which had been occurring in the south from the turn of the century. During this period the paternalistic relationships which had existed between white settlers and Aborigines during the late nineteenth century gave way to overt racial prejudice towards Aborigines and rigid social barriers between white and black. The movement of Aborigines into the towns from 1911 and the presence of their children in the schools brought white and black into direct contact and conflict. Through their angry representations to the government, the white townspeople gave formal expression to racial tensions in the south. Their demands for the exclusion of Aboriginal children from the schools and the removal of Aboriginal families from the town camps forced the government to adopt an official policy of the social isolation of Aborigines in farming settlements in the south. In 1915 the government appointed an energetic and determined Chief Protector, A.O. Neville, to implement this policy and from this time the Department played a much more active role in relation to Aborigines in the south.

The "native settlements" were planned as self-sufficient farming communities where Aborigines could be isolated from the wider community while their children were trained to find work and social acceptance outside the settlements. From the Department's point of view, the centralisation of Aborigines at the settlements also represented an economic alternative to providing separate services and facilities for them in the wider community. In addition, Aborigines at the
settlements could be forced to contribute to their own maintenance. This native settlement scheme was to remain the cornerstone of official policy in the south until the 1930s.

Following the opening of Carrolup Native Settlement in 1915 and Moore River Native Settlement in 1918, ration depots in the south were progressively closed down and the children's missions were phased out and Aborigines were directed to move to the settlements. Lack of funding and land and the Aborigines' resistance to moving to the settlements prevented the wholesale removal of Aborigines from the wider community. Nevertheless, between 1915 and 1920 a significant proportion of the Aboriginal population in the south was forced into the settlements. For them this meant a dramatic dislocation from their home districts and the disruption of ties with their families and friends; they were forced to lead a drab institutionalised existence in the settlements under the direct control of the Department. At the same time those who remained outside the settlements were also brought more directly under the control of the Department.

The White Response

The earlier complaints about Aboriginal camps in the coastal towns of Perth, Bunbury and Busselton lacked the hysteria and overt racism of those made by white residents of the wheat belt towns. This was due in part to the higher proportion of Aborigines to whites in these towns from 1911. Andreski (1977) suggests a direct relationship between the outbreak of racial hostility and the presence of significant numbers of a physically and culturally distinctive minority group and posits a "critical ratio" of ten per cent between the dominant and minority populations as being most conducive to persecution of minority groups. The ratio of Aborigines to whites
in the towns of Katanning and Moora came closest to this critical ratio and this may help to explain why the most strident complaints came from there. The growing Aboriginal population in the towns was all the more "shocking" to the white residents who had assumed that the "colour problem" was "dying out" and while the Aborigines had remained scattered through the bush they had been able to continue in this belief. The permanent presence of large numbers of Aborigines in the towns also challenged the social barriers which the whites had built up to strictly limit their contacts with Aborigines and aroused their deep-seated fears of "physical and moral contamination" from living in close proximity to Aborigines. This was particularly evident in their objections to the presence of Aboriginal children in the schools, a concern that was clearly expressed by the father of white children at the Katanning school in a letter to the West Australian in 1917. He wrote that although "Australia was proud of her White Australian policy", it was not being observed at Katanning School where the children were mixed together and the teacher was unable to train the white children about the "colour line" or the "differences between the races". He warned that this would lead to the "contamination" of the white children's morals and to their "loss of self respect". He added that it was "unfortunate" that Australia had the "blacks and the half-castes, especially the latter" and called on legislators to "make the laws about inter-mingling of races most stringent".¹

There were few expressions of sympathy for the plight of the Aborigines and no apparent understanding of the fact that it was impossible for people living in camps lacking even the basic amenities of running water and sanitary facilities to maintain standards of hygiene acceptable either to themselves or to the white townspeople.
Instead the white residents took the view that Aborigines were "incapable" and "unwilling" to live in any other way. They claimed that the camps were a "health hazard" and a blot on the appearance of the towns and the respectability of the townspeople. Through their local town organisations (in particular, the Schools Boards and Roads Boards) they pressured the government to exclude Aboriginal children from state schools and to move the families from the town camps to segregated reserves away from the town boundaries.

The Scaddan Labor government was slow to respond to the demands of the white townspeople. While sympathetic to their objections, it was unwilling to take any action involving additional spending on Aborigines and instead was determined to bring to a halt the trend towards increasing expenditure under the previous government.* The Minister in charge of the Aborigines Department from 1911 to 1914, Colonial Secretary John Michael Drew, personified the change amongst supporters of the Labor Party from an early stated concern for Aboriginal workers to open opposition to their employment and disinterest in their general welfare. Drew was born near Northampton in Western Australia and his background was in farming and journalism. From 1892 he was editor of the provincial newspaper, the Victorian Express (renamed the Geraldton Express in 1894) and as editor he was said to have been "scrupulous, honest, unbiased". He himself claimed that his newspaper was the "scourge of injustice, the scourge of inhumanity, the scourge of the oppressors of the poor and of public robbers".² During the 1890s and early 1900s the Geraldton Express provided a voice for the anti-pastoralist lobby and it played a role

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* The Department's annual grant was reduced from £45,938 in 1911 to £37,713 in 1912, £32,065 in 1913 and £33,086 in 1914 (Biskup, 1973).
in events leading up to the appointment of the Roth Royal Commission in 1904. Drew entered Parliament in 1900 as the Independent member for the Central Province in the Legislative Council. His alliance with the Labor Party led to his appointment in the same year as Minister for Lands in the Daglish Labor ministry and as Leader of the House he introduced the 1904 Aborigines Bill in the Legislative Council. In 1911 he became an official member of the Labor Party. Although he was known for his strong principles and support for the underprivileged, Drew did little to assist Aborigines and during his ministry the activities of the Department were drastically curtailed. Expansion of the Department in the north ground to a halt and nothing was done to relieve the conflict in the south. At the same time Drew did nothing to relieve the plight of Aboriginal workers.

Drew’s inaction caused considerable friction between him and Chief Protector Gale, who was openly critical of his Minister’s failure to deal with the situation in the south. Initially Gale argued for the development of separate facilities for Aborigines in the wider community in the south but, increasingly frustrated by Drew’s obstinacy, he began to advocate the segregation of Aborigines on farming settlements where facilities could be centralised and the needs of Aborigines provided for with a minimum of expenditure. Meanwhile, it was left to the Education Department to open two Aboriginal schools in the south and in 1914, a few months before the state elections, it authorised the exclusion of Aboriginal children from two state schools in the south. At the same time Gale announced that the government had agreed in principle to the establishment of a native settlement in the south.
There was little that Aborigines could do in response to these developments. They had no recognised spokesmen of their own to present their case,* they were excluded from the organisations of the wider community and they had no organisations of their own, they had no voting rights and they were marginal to the rural economy. Conventional forms of democratic protest were thus denied to them. Most Aborigines simply endured their unenviable situation although a few expressed their hostility through fist fights with local white men, inevitably ending up in prison. A small number of literate Aborigines made representations to the government on behalf of their families but they had little impact as the opinion of the general public was strongly in favour of the demands of the white townspeople in the wheat belt.

Conflict over Education

The first signs of conflict in the schools occurred in Beverley in late 1911. In September the local protector, Constable McDonald, informed the Department that only four of the thirty Aboriginal children in the district were attending school and that the others were living with their parents in the bush. Acting on his own initiative,** he had instructed the parents to send their children

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* Howard (1981) states that while Aboriginal leadership amongst Aborigines in the south early this century remained confined within the boundaries of close kin in the intra-ethnic field, a few "better class" part-Aborigines emerged as leaders in the inter-ethnic political field. There is little evidence of such leaders during the events between 1911 and 1914 and part-Aborigines who made representations to the government during this period were fighting for the rights of their immediate families rather than for broader Aboriginal groupings.

**There is no record of the police being instructed to enforce the attendance of Aboriginal children at state schools at this time. However, the police were required to exercise a general supervision over the attendance of white children in country areas and it is probable that Constable McDonald erroneously assumed that he was to take the same action in relation to Aboriginal children in his district.
to school, but none had done so and he asked what action he could take to force them to follow his directives. Gale was absent on a tour of inspection in the north and his deputy instructed McDonald to inform the parents that their children would be taken from them and placed in missions if they did not send them to school. In December McDonald reported that four families had moved into Beverley and there were fifteen children to be enrolled at the local state school in the new year. However, he also reported that the school headmaster was convinced that local white parents would object to this and respond by removing their children from the school and send them to the convent school instead. In anticipation of this, the headmaster had forwarded a request to the Education Department for the establishment of a separate school at Beverley for the Aboriginal children.

Gale was now back in Perth and he took the matter up with the Education Department. He was personally in favour of the establishment of the school. The alternative suggested by his deputy of placing the children in missions would have involved considerable expense and besides, there was only limited accommodation available. The Education Department, while sympathetic to the situation of the white parents, was prepared to take charge of the school only on condition that the Aborigines Department fulfilled its legal responsibility of providing money for the school building and a teacher's salary. Drew responded cautiously to this proposal. While he believed that white children should not be expected to share a classroom with Aboriginal children and also recognised the Department's responsibility for the education of Aboriginal children, he was concerned that such a step would create a precedent for other towns. Given the state's parlous financial position and the Labor
government's intention to cut back on expenditure on Aborigines, such an eventuality was to be avoided. As a result, no action was taken and when the Aboriginal children arrived to enrol at the Beverley School in February 1912 they were sent away as they were said to be "anything but clean".

In the same month Drew instructed Gale to look into the costs of introducing separate education for Aboriginal children in the settled parts of the state. Drew's subsequent actions suggest that he had no intention of introducing such a system and that he was using delaying tactics in the hope that the conflict would either resolve itself or that the Education Department would be forced to step in and take responsibility for establishing a school at Beverley. In his report (based on information collected by police officers) Gale stated that there were 167 Aboriginal children who would attend school in the settled areas and thirteen centres where schools could be established. This would involve an initial cost of £2,600 for the erection of canvas-walled shelters and furniture and a recurring annual expenditure of £2,500 for the teachers' salaries. He recommended that schools be opened immediately at Beverley, Katanning, Mount Barker and Wagin. However Drew replied that the cost involved was prohibitive and that no action was to be taken. 4

Meanwhile, Aboriginal parents were enrolling their children at the Katanning state school and by April 1912 there were thirteen Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children attending the school. They were of varying ages and as none had previously attended school the headmaster placed them all in the infants class. Education Department officials considered the presence of children of up to the age of fourteen in the class intolerable and demanded that the Department open a separate school for the children. There were also complaints
from white parents and in May a letter appeared in the *West Australian* objecting to the "intermingling" of Aboriginal and white children at the school on the grounds that this would encourage "the future mothers and fathers of this State in the belief that there [were] no differences between the races". However Drew refused to take action and in the end the Education Department was obliged to set aside funds for a special teacher. In June, Miss Florence Lance was appointed as teacher and classes started in the same month in an old building on the school grounds.

The situation at Beverley remained unresolved and tempers were flaring. In July 1912 the Secretary of the Beverley School Committee reported that the Aborigines were

...howling down at the reserve because the school had not been started. They had congregated there for that reason and think they have been taken in.

In September Canon Groser wrote from the Beverley Rectory that several Aboriginal families were "roaming the streets and threatening to invade the government school" and he suggested that the Department rent an old house and turn it into a school for the children. However Drew still refused to take any action.

The enrolment of Aboriginal children at the Mount Barker state school during 1913 also led to a spate of objections from local white parents and in October 1913 the Plantagenet Roads Board requested the Education Department to establish a separate school for Aboriginal children at Mount Barker. The Minister for Education replied that the school at Katanning was not to be seen as a precedent, and that his Department had been "forced" into opening it by the inaction of the Aborigines Department. Drew was then approached but stated that he could do nothing as no provision had been made for the
education of Aboriginal children outside of missions in the Department's estimates. There was also conflict in Perth during 1913 when AAM missionaries from the Dulhii Guñyah Orphanage were prevented from enrolling sixteen children at the Victoria Park state school. In this case, after sustained pressure from the AAM authorities and Gale, Drew reluctantly agreed to fund a teacher on condition that the teacher and curriculum followed by the pupils were approved by the Education Department and that the school was regularly inspected by the Schools Inspector.⁹

Early in 1914, following continued pressure from Beverley residents, the Education Department opened a school there in a run-down house and appointed Miss Ashe as teacher. At this stage Drew seemed to be in a winning position. Through his obstinacy the Education Department had been forced into opening two schools and, although it continued to pressure the Aborigines Department to take over funding of the schools, no strong action had been taken to force it to do so. Important events in 1914 changed this.

Trouble broke out at Quairading in March 1914 following the enrolment of several Aboriginal children whose parents had purchased blocks in town for the express purpose of sending their children to school. The Headmistress, Mrs Mary Peacock, informed the District Board of Education that local white parents objected to the presence of the children on the grounds that the "proportion of black to white [was] too great". An outbreak of ringworm and sore eyes at the school was attributed to the Aboriginal children and it was alleged that a white pupil had fainted twice due to the "abominable smell of the black children" and had to be sent to a farm for a month to recuperate. Attendance at the school had dropped from thirty-four to four, and the local medical officer had advised her to close the
school down. Mrs Peacock, with the support of the Dangin Roads Board, demanded the immediate removal of the Aboriginal children from the school. In a petition to the Education Department in April, parents demanded a separate school for the Aboriginal children as they could not "endure their foul smelling bodies as an association for [their] children any longer". These hysterical statements contrasted markedly with the report of the Chief Inspector of Schools who visited the school early in March. He found ten Aboriginal pupils enrolled at the school and saw "nothing objectionable in the way of dirt or unpleasing odour". In his opinion the complaints were based solely on the parents' and teacher's objection to the presence of coloured children in the classroom.

Meanwhile, following an outbreak of diphtheria and a death from typhoid in Katanning in 1914, local white residents demanded the closure of the Katanning Aboriginal school. Following threats of physical violence from the white townspeople, the Aborigines were dispersed by police from the camp and they reportedly left the district in fear of their lives. However, further trouble broke out when they moved into camps at Gnowangerup, Tambellup and Mount Barker. In April 1914, one hundred white children were withdrawn from the Mount Barker state school and their parents refused to allow them to return until the Aboriginal children at the school had been barred.

In the second week of April an inter-departmental conference was held to discuss ways of dealing with the situation. The Director of Education offered to provide separate teaching facilities at Quairading and Mount Barker and elsewhere as required if the Aborigines Department would cover the costs. Gale supported the proposal but Drew simply set it aside. Gale was incensed, and he
wrote to the Education Department complaining that

...the Minister, every time I have brought
the question before him turned it down and
in consequence, no money has been provided
in my estimates for educational purposes...
The whole position is one of finance, and
if the Government will find the money I am
quite prepared to initiate the work. 13

However, 1914 was an election year and the government could not afford
to let the matter rest. A mounting deficit, increasing unemployment
and the government's attempt to impose a war-time tax had reduced
its popularity with the electorate 14 and it could not allow the
schools issue to accelerate this trend. On 20 April the Education
Department announced its decision to exclude Aboriginal children
from the Mount Barker school under a provision of the 1893 Education
Act which allowed for the expulsion of any pupil "suffering from
any infectious or contagious disease, or whose presence [was] other-
wise injurious to the health and welfare of other children". 15 On
the following day it authorised the exclusion of the Queirading
Aboriginal children under the same provision with the exception of
one family of children who were said to be "just about white". This
provision had first been used in 1905 to exclude Aboriginal children
from the Shark Bay state school and again in 1906 when the Education
Department authorised the exclusion of an Aboriginal boy from the
Woodlupine school because he was "too dirty". 16 Similar action had
also been taken in South Africa in relation to coloured children
in government schools, and in one case the parents of the excluded
children had taken the matter to the Supreme Court. Significantly,
in 1912 the Superintendent-General of Education in Western Australia
wrote to the Department of Public Education in Cape Town requesting
a detailed report on the case which upheld the white parent's action. 17 *

In mid June, following the resignation of the teacher at the Aboriginal school at Katanning, the Education Department announced its intention to withdraw funding for the school. With uncharacteristic promptness, Drew offered to pay the teacher's salary if the Education Department would appoint a replacement, and he went so far as to offer to assume responsibility for the funding of Aboriginal education in general. It is not clear what caused this sudden change in policy, although it is likely that he was prompted by growing dissatisfaction amongst his Cabinet colleagues at his failure to adequately deal with the schools issue. A further possibility is suggested by Gale's warning in his 1914 Annual Report that representations could be made to the "Home Authorities" if the government continued to neglect its legal obligation to provide education for Aborigines. 18

The Education Department authorities refused to cooperate with Drew and the Katanning school was closed down at the end of June. However, it continued to fund the Beverley school until 1916 when

* In 1911 a European named Moller, married to a coloured woman, enrolled his children at the government school at Keimoes. However the parents of the white children at the school objected to the presence of the children and threatened to withdraw their children from the school if the Moller children were not excluded. The headmaster and the Keimoes School Committee ordered the immediate expulsion of the children and their decision was endorsed by the Gordonia District School Board. Moller failed in an attempt to gain a court order to compel the headmaster and the School Committee to readmit his children and he subsequently took the matter to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court upheld the earlier decisions and the right of the School Committee to legally exclude one class of children from the school and ruled that the 1905 Education Act applied to European children and only in certain cases to coloured children. This meant that the parents of coloured children did not have the right to compel the School Boards to admit their children although they could apply to the School Board to admit their children or request the Board to provide separate educational facilities for their children (E/3217/1912).
the Aborigines Department took over financial responsibility for the school. The Education Department agreed to continue to inspect the school and the Beverley School Committee maintained an active involvement in the school until its closure in 1918.\textsuperscript{19} Despite repeated requests from Aboriginal and white residents at Quairading, the Education Department persistently refused to open a separate school for Aboriginal children in the town. Early in 1915 Edward Jacobs appealed to the Education Department to open a school there as the Aborigines Department was threatening to send his children to a mission and he suggested that "by getting a teacher up...we might stop them". He alleged that local school authorities had originally encouraged Aboriginal parents to enrol their children at the school to "make up the roll of pupils so that they could put up a state school", but that once the school was operational they took steps to have the Aboriginal children removed. The Education Department referred the matter to the Aborigines Department, noting that the government had "decided...that schools for the natives are to be controlled by the Aborigines Department".\textsuperscript{20}

It was at this time that John Kickett began his long and unsuccessful campaign to have his children enrolled at the Quairading school. Born in 1878, Kickett had been sent at the age of ten to the Swan Native and Half-Caste Mission by a Beverley farmer, Mr Burgess. He was later transferred to the Swan Boys Orphanage where he stayed for three years before returning to the Beverley district to work as a farm hand for Burgess. Leaving Burgess' employ after five years he took up contracting and assisted his father, Thomas Kickett, on his farm in the Beverley district. In 1912 Kickett was granted exemption from the 1905 Aborigines Act and at the same time purchased a block in Beverley so that he could send his children
to the proposed Aboriginal school. His run of bad luck started in the following year when, as mentioned in the previous chapter, his father lost his farm and Kickett's repeated attempts to seek redress for his father failed. In 1914, frustrated at delays in the establishment of the Beverley school, he purchased a block of land at Quairading and moved there with his family. In the same year his exemption was cancelled after he was charged under the Licensing Act with being a non-bona fide traveller on licensed premises and accused (but not charged) by the York police of supplying alcohol to Aborigines and of fighting with a group of white men outside the Quairading Hotel. Kickett wrote to the Department objecting to the cancellation of his exemption, stating that he did not want to be struck off the electoral roll and that he was a "staunch labour" man. In the same year his children were excluded from the Quairading school. Between 1915 and 1918 Kickett wrote to various ministers and members of Parliament imploring them to meet his request to have his children enrolled at the school. In July 1915 he sent the following letter to the Minister for Education:

I am writing to you on behalf of my children. Now Sir is my children allowed to go to school, I wont your answer. I see Honobles Gentlemen Messes Munsie and Millington and they told me the children could go providing I live as a white man and looked after my children. Now Sir I am farming I have over 200 acres of land and am trying to make a living out of it Next is schooling for My children Mr Stewart the Head Teacher he told me to write to you. Now Sir I was teached at a State school. I wont to see my children the same I dont want to see them degraded.22

In 1917, Kickett and his nine year old daughter Gladys rode on horseback through the Quairading district collecting signatures for a petition asking the Education Department to admit the Kickett children
to the school. Although thirteen of the seventeen signatures on
the petition came from parents of children enrolled at the school,
and despite the support of the local Member of Parliament and the
headmaster, the Education Department maintained its earlier ruling
and the Director of Education informed his Minister that he did not
"feel inclined" to recommend the admission of the Kickett children. 23
This prompted the Chief Protector to comment that it appeared that
the Education Department's policy was to "gradually but surely"
exclude all Aboriginal children from state schools. In 1918, in
a final effort to beat the Education Department, Kickett reapplied
for exemption from the 1905 Aborigines Act. However, his application
was refused and he died during the 1920s without satisfying his
ambition to have his children educated. 24

The Move towards Exclusion

The white townspeople's complaints were not confined to the
schools. They objected strongly to the Aborigines' very presence
in the towns and to their use of town facilities. From 1911, for
example, Aborigines were increasingly denied access to normal hospital
facilities. Some hospitals provided tent accommodation in the
hospital grounds while others offered only out-patient services and
seriously ill patients were sometimes housed in the town jail. 25
In 1911 the Chairman of the Moora Hospital Board, H.B. Lefroy,
informed the Department that Aborigines would not be accommodated
at the new Moora Hospital 26 and two years later the AAM missionary,
Annie Lock, reported to the Department from Katanning that "dark
people" were being refused admission to the government hospital
there. 27 In 1913, Chief Protector Gale proposed the erection of a
number of "Aboriginal wards" in hospital grounds in the south and
he put forward a standard plan for two-roomed wooden buildings providing accommodation for four persons at a cost of £100 per building. The proposal was rejected by Drew.  

From 1911 there were growing complaints from the white residents of Moora as the number of Aborigines camped in the town increased. Their camp was situated several hundred yards from the centre of the town and, although the police attempted to strictly control the movement of Aborigines, several local white organisations began to agitate for their removal altogether. In 1914 the Moora Local Board of Health recommended that the Aborigines be moved to a camp at Karramarra Well, five miles out of Moora in the Dandarragan district. When the Dandarragan Roads Board strongly opposed the establishment of an Aboriginal reserve in the area, the Moora police then recommended that the town be declared a prohibited area for Aborigines under the 1905 Aborigines Act.  

In 1915, in an effort to discourage Aborigines from coming to town, local sports clubs excluded Aborigines from participating in sporting events in the town and in the same year a Moora resident, Bert Bevan, who lived next to the camp, threatened in a letter to Truth to "do a bit of rifle practice" at the Moora camp that would "cause a sensation...as big as the forcing of the Dardanelles". Meanwhile, during the winter months of 1915, Aborigines in the camp were reported to be suffering from colds and influenza and two babies died of malnutrition. In the following year the Department gazetted a camping reserve for Aborigines at Karramarra Well, and the police ordered the Aborigines to move there. They refused to go, listing their objections to the new camping ground in a letter to the Department. Most of them worked in town or on adjacent farms and they had no vehicles to travel the five miles from the reserve into town. It would also be difficult for them
to get stores and they asked: "how we going to live on rock and water? We will be camels directly". They also asked why they had to move. If it was because of the lack of sanitation in the camp: "well no sanitary man came when they had sanitary houses", and if it was because of disease: "we did not bring disease into the country in the early days we never had diseases and know doctor and know one to troubles". They also objected to the police constable at Moora who "chased" them "day after day...like wild rabbits after our burres and when we shift from one burrer to a Buddy hole". 32

The Department also received complaints from white residents about the Katanning camp from 1911. They complained that the camp was too close to town (it was half a mile from the Post Office) and that drinking and fighting there disturbed the nearby residents. They also complained about conditions at the camp: the site was devoid of timber and the camps were exposed both to the elements and the eyes of passers-by. There was no water supply (the Aborigines helped themselves to water from the tanks of neighbouring houses), and no sanitary facilities. During the winter months of 1911 there were three deaths at the camp. 33 In 1912 the white residents complained that Annie Lock was encouraging Aborigines from the surrounding district to move to the Katanning camp. Finally, in October 1913 the Katanning Roads Board demanded the removal of all Aborigines from the town camp, recommending that they be moved to a camping site on the Carrolup River some sixteen miles from town. In the following month a deputation of Katanning residents waited on Gale and repeated the demand. They told Gale that the Aborigines were "a nuisance, and a menace to the morals of the youths of Katanning" and that white women "were afraid that they would be interfered with by some black man". 34 As has been mentioned, the
Aborigines were dispersed from the camp early in 1914 only to drift back again by the middle of the year. The Aborigines now took steps to deal with the situation themselves, and on a Sunday in June Aborigines from Wagin, Narrogin, Bunbury and Katanning met at the Katanning camp for the purpose of formulating laws to regulate behaviour in the camps and to appoint officers to implement these laws. Annie Lock (who stated emphatically that she had no role in the organisation of the meeting) was invited to sit down with them to record their decisions. They began by chastising George Jerong Dinah, the King of Wagin (also referred to by the Aborigines as their Governor), and he was told to "take his stand as he had neglected his duties". Other Aborigines were appointed to act as "magistrates" and "policemen" in the camps. The laws recorded by Annie Lock were as follows:

1. They must be good.

2. No loafers allowed on camp.

3. No gambling in the way of cards and 2-up allowed, they can have a game of cards at night when their work is done but not play for clothes or money.

4. All the men and women to be home from the town before dark or 6 o'clock and no drink allowed if they do get any drink they must not bring it into the camp and they must not make any noise or disturbance in town or on the reserve.

5. No native arms to be used to fight with and no guns and not even the wand [digging stick] the women use.

6. All young men must have their own camp and not loaf about on the old people and eat their rations but go and carry their own food and help the old ones.
Bolton (1981) describes this meeting as "an impressive and moving attempt by a deprived group to create a discipline for themselves" and an "attempt to adapt the white man's institutions to their own needs and purposes". However, it is possible that the meeting had its roots in Aboriginal tradition. Hammond* (1933) records that during the nineteenth century large tribal gatherings were held by Aborigines at particular sites in the south where Aboriginal men referred to as yoolins met together to discuss alterations to rules and rituals. They were also responsible for ensuring that the new rules were implemented.

Whatever the reasons for the meeting, it had little effect on the situation in the Katanning camp. Although the Katanning police informed the Department that the new laws had created a good deal of discussion amongst the Aborigines, and some had even consulted the local solicitor about them, the authority structures for enforcement proved ineffectual. The appointed officers had problems within their own ranks and in July 1914 the "magistrate" from the camp, William, informed the Katanning police that his "sergeant", Stanley Moses, was to be dismissed as he refused to take orders.37

In the meantime the white townspeople had lost patience and in January 1915 the police rounded up Aborigines at the Katanning camp and forced them to walk to a camping site on the Carrolup River. Annie Lock accompanied them and took over responsibility from the police for issuing rations to the Aborigines.38 It is probable that

* Jesse Hammond lived and worked in the south of Western Australia during the second half of the nineteenth century. He was semi-literate and his observations of Aboriginal life during this period were recorded by Paul Hasluck (then a reporter with the West Australian) during the early 1930s. These appeared in Winjan's People, which was published under Hammond's name.
she saw this as the first step towards the establishment of the mission farming settlements first mooted by AAM mission authorities in 1912.

The actions of the Katanning residents were noted by other townspeople in the wheat belt and in February 1915 a petition signed by thirty Quairading residents demanding the removal of Aborigines from the town was forwarded to the Aborigines Department. At the same time the Aborigines, fearful of the possible repercussions of the petition, moved off to camps in the Kellerberrin and Brookton districts. In the following month the Quairading and District Progress Association passed a resolution opposing the petition. This was probably motivated by their concern at the loss of Aboriginal workers from the district. 39

**The Native Settlement Scheme**

The government did little initially to deal with complaints by white townspeople about the camps and it made no effort to improve conditions in the camps or to remove the Aborigines from the towns. Again it can only be assumed that Drew hoped that the conflict would resolve itself without his intervention. Gale, however, had responded favourably to the proposal by Katanning residents in 1913 to establish a self-supporting agricultural mission settlement there. In May he outlined his proposal in a memo to Drew.

Gale's native settlement scheme combined a number of earlier plans and reflected the trend in the Department between 1908 and 1911 towards providing segregated facilities for Aborigines. It incorporated the educational and training role of the children's missions and Gale's and Connolly's earlier proposal of segregated mission farming communities, and it also bore similarities to the
original plan for the government settlement, Moola Bulla, in the East Kimberley. The settlements were to provide a "home" for Aborigines where the children could be educated and trained in farming and other work to make the settlements self-sufficient. The adults were also to assist in these activities, while the elderly and sick were to be rationed and cared for at the settlements. To sustain the adults' interest in their work, Gale suggested that they be paid a small wage and that this be placed in Trust Accounts to prevent them from spending it on alcohol. He was convinced that the cost of establishing the settlements would be off-set by the savings effected by the centralisation of ration issue and education and by the farm produce grown for domestic consumption. He was also certain that Aborigines would move willingly to the settlements but suggested that those who refused to go could be sent there under Ministerial warrant. Regulations could be drawn up under the 1905 Aborigines Act to ensure good order and discipline. In conclusion, Gale wrote:

The native settlement scheme as outlined by myself...is the only solution to the difficulty [of the rash of complaints from white residents] and will remove the cause of the complaint made about aborigines being near towns and will centralise the education of those aborigines and half-castes within its influence.

Gale's proposal met with little approval from Drew. He described it as a "vague and hazy proposition" which could "run into huge expense" and informed Gale that he intended to hold out for the development of separate schools for Aboriginal children "in the near future". However, the events of 1914 forced Drew into action and in his 1914 Annual Report Gale announced that the government had agreed in principle to the "question of establishing native settlements". A start was to be made on a large reserve at Carrolup.
He added that while there was "yet time", other portions of the state should also be set aside for such settlements. In July 1914, recently married, he left to take long service leave in Japan and during his absence steps were taken by a new Minister of the Department to remove him from office and to appoint a more amenable administrator in his place.

The Administrators

In November 1914 the Scaddan Labor government was returned to power with a reduced majority. Its decreased popularity in the southern rural districts probably contributed to the decision to transfer the portfolio of Aboriginal Affairs from Drew (who remained as Colonial Secretary) to the Minister without Portfolio, Rufus H. Underwood. Underwood was a strong and determined individual who came to Western Australia from Victoria during the goldrushes of the 1890s. A bootmaker by trade he became the President of the Bootmakers Union in Western Australia and later a farmer in the Tammin district. In 1906 he entered Parliament as MLA for the Pilbara. He held this seat as a member of the Labor Party until 1917 and, following his defection from the Party in that year, as a member of the National Party until 1924. He held the portfolio of Aboriginal Affairs from November 1914 to July 1916 as a member of the Scaddan Labor ministry and from November 1917 to March 1919 in the Lefroy National ministry. 41

Underwood was an active participant in debates on Aboriginal issues from his earliest days in Parliament and the opinions he aired were strongly expressed and frequently controversial. However, his interest grew from his determination to push for greater pragmatism and economy in the administration of Aboriginal affairs rather than
from any concern for the situation of Aborigines in the state. In 1912 he told the Legislative Assembly that:

The sooner the aborigines died out in Western Australia the better it would be for all concerned....That seemed a hard thing to say but it appeared they could not preserve the aboriginal race and at the same time settle the white race in their country.

While Underwood had supported the trend towards segregated institutions for Aborigines during Connolly's ministry, he was openly critical of the associated high levels of expenditure and he was convinced that the reduction in expenditure initiated by Drew could be accelerated by increasing the efficiency of the Department and introducing strict economy measures in all items of expenditure. Underwood had also questioned both Prinsep's and Gale's abilities as administrators. In 1906 he demanded that Prinsep be replaced by an officer with experience in Aboriginal affairs and three years later alleged that Gale lacked the "ability and the energy to carry out his work properly". In 1912 he further criticised Gale for not having "a proper idea" of what his duties were. At the same time, he was staunchly anti-pastoralist and during debate on the estimates in 1906 he likened the practice of appointing pastoralists as protectors to "leaving a hawk to protect a chicken". Underwood also launched frequent attacks on the system of "unpaid slavery" in the pastoral industry and objected in particular to the fact that "able-bodied" Aborigines were employed without payment on the stations while the government was obliged to pay for rations for the sick and the elderly. He argued consistently for the adoption of the system which he claimed operated in Queensland of forcing employers by law to pay Aboriginal workers a minimum wage, part of which was paid to
the government to cover the costs of relieving Aborigines throughout the state. In promoting this scheme he clashed with many of his Labor Party colleagues who demanded the total exclusion of Aborigines from the workforce.

Underwood was strongly opposed to mission involvement in Aboriginal affairs. He believed that it was "useless" to subsidise missions in the north of the state as Aborigines there were capable of surviving without the assistance of the missionaries. He was also convinced that the children's missions in the south had succeeded only in teaching the children that they were "inferior beings".

Like Connolly and Gale, he also believed that it was "cruelty" to educate children in missions until they reached maturity and then to send them out into the community where they did not fit into white or Aboriginal society. At the same time he objected to the provision of separate state schools for Aboriginal children on the grounds that, with its limited budget, the Department could not afford to become "another Education Department" and that the government should avoid perpetuating "an intermediate race" of Aborigines who were outside white and Aboriginal society. In his opinion those children who conformed to "acceptable" standards of "cleanliness" and "morality" should be admitted to state schools but that the others were "not fit to be educated at all" and should be segregated from the wider community where it could "only be hoped" that they would "die out as quickly as possible". While Underwood supported the plan to establish a settlement away from towns in the south, he was strongly opposed to any mission involvement in the scheme and in 1915 he told the Legislative Assembly that "settlements for aborigines under mission management [were] a failure". By contrast, he emphasised that the government-run cattle station at Moola Bulla
was achieving its purpose "most effectively" and was even operating as a "trading concern". 52

Underwood's first two major actions as Minister demonstrated his ruthlessness and determination to force the administration of Aboriginal affairs to conform with his own strong views. Two months after taking office he cut off subsidies to all Aboriginal missions in the state leaving them in a precarious situation in the middle of the financial year. When Connolly challenged him in Parliament over this action Underwood retorted that during his ministry Connolly "only wrote minutes" while he was prepared to "cut off the subsidy". 53 Church and mission authorities also raised strong objections and, reluctantly, Underwood agreed to restore subsidies to the children's missions in the south (with the exception of the New Norcia Orphanages) and to Anglican missions in the north. He also reduced the grant to the AAM missionaries at Carrolup from £500 to £350 with the intention of keeping their activities to a minimum while he devised a more "suitable" arrangement. 54

Underwood also took steps to remove Gale from office. Bolton (1981) attributes Underwood's objections to Gale to the latter's opposition to the policy of segregation and to the native settlement scheme in particular. However, as has been indicated, Gale supported segregation and had himself originally proposed the native settlement scheme. Nevertheless, they did disagree on several key issues including the role of the missions (in particular their role in the native settlement scheme) and the proposal to have wages due to Aborigines placed at the disposal of the Department. Gale attacked this in his 1911 Annual Report, stating that:
Objections might reasonably be taken to such a scheme on the ground that the individual native labourer would be exploited for the benefit of others. Apart from this phase, such a scheme would be absolutely impracticable and would create endless trouble and confusion throughout the State.\footnote{Gale's salary in February 1915 was £504 per annum and, acting on a recent recommendation by the Public Service Commission, he had applied to have his salary increased to £636 (PD, 1915, 51: 307).}

Gale's pastoral background and his ties with the landed Establishment further alienated him from Underwood and, combined with his reputation as an inept administrator, convinced Underwood that Gale would prove an impediment rather than the lieutenant required to bring his ambitious plans to fulfilment.

With the outbreak of war, Gale had been obliged to cut short his stay in Japan and on his return to Perth he sought permission to have his leave terminated and to return to work. Underwood ordered him to complete his leave and when Gale returned to the Department in March 1915 he was informed that he was to be retrenched as an "excess officer". The Secretary of the Immigration Department, A.O. Neville, was to be appointed as Chief Protector in his place.\footnote{Gale's salary in February 1915 was £504 per annum and, acting on a recent recommendation by the Public Service Commission, he had applied to have his salary increased to £636 (PD, 1915, 51: 307).}

Underwood's official reason for dismissing Gale was economy. He argued that Gale's salary\footnote{Gale's salary in February 1915 was £504 per annum and, acting on a recent recommendation by the Public Service Commission, he had applied to have his salary increased to £636 (PD, 1915, 51: 307).} was out of all proportion to the limited range of duties he was required to fulfil as Chief Protector and, in his opinion, it simply reflected the practice of filling the position with "some officer who was paid a salary with a view to impressing Exeter Hall".\footnote{Gale's salary in February 1915 was £504 per annum and, acting on a recent recommendation by the Public Service Commission, he had applied to have his salary increased to £636 (PD, 1915, 51: 307).} A lower ranking officer, acting under the guidance of his Minister, could carry out the necessary duties and Underwood saw no reason why the position of Chief Protector should not be a joint appointment. The Public Service and Gale's friends
in the Opposition were not impressed by Underwood's argument, while the pastoralists were alarmed at the appointment of a Chief Protector with no ties to the landed Establishment, and in 1915 the matter of Gale's dismissal was raised in the Legislative Council. Walter Kingsmill (Liberal, Metropolitan), a close friend of Gale, led the attack on Underwood, questioning the legality and economy * of Gale's dismissal and criticising the appointment of an "office man" in the place of an officer with broad experience in Aboriginal affairs. He described Underwood's actions as those of a "wayward and destructive child" and moved successfully for the appointment of a Select Committee to look into the matter. 58

The Report of the Select Committee, tabled in Parliament in October 1915, stated that Gale's dismissal and Neville's appointment were "altogether irregular and contrary to the usual customs and provisions of the Public Service Act" and, since Underwood had failed to appear before the Committee as directed, the Report also raised doubts about his ability to guide Neville in carrying out his duties as Chief Protector. 59 The Report recommended that only officers with experience in Aboriginal affairs should be appointed as Chief Protector and that Gale should be reappointed immediately. Although the Report was accepted without qualification, Underwood refused to follow its directives and when Gale threatened to take legal action Underwood went so far as to withhold the back-pay due to him until he agreed to take no further action. 60

* The economy achieved by Gale's dismissal was indeed illusory. Gale retired on a pension of £220 and although Neville started on a salary of £312 his salary had increased to £512 by 1918.
A.O. Neville, Chief Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia (1915–1940), c. 1940
Auber Octavius Neville was officially appointed Chief Protector of Aborigines in May 1915 and retained this position until his retirement from the public service in March 1940. Like his predecessors he had no previous administrative experience in Aboriginal affairs, however, his appointment was a break with tradition in that he also had no experience of Aboriginal people whatsoever. There was little to recommend him apart from a sound administrative background, limited experience in the organisation of assistance programmes for special groups in the community, and his apparent willingness to support all of Underwood's proposed changes to the Department.

Neville grew up in England in the small Northumberland village of Ford where his father was the Anglican rector. Although his family intended that he should go into banking, Neville decided on a more adventurous life and in 1897 he left for Western Australia where one of his brothers was practising law. Shortly after arriving in Perth, Neville started work as a shipping clerk and in August 1897 joined the public service as a clerk in the records office of the Works Department. In 1900 he was appointed Registrar for a small sub-department of the Premier's Office and two years later became Registrar of the reconstituted Colonial Secretary's Department where he set about extensively reorganising the Department's system of records. From 1906 Neville also held the post of Immigration Officer and when the sub-department of Tourism and Immigration was created in the Colonial Secretary's Department in 1910 he was appointed Secretary. Some forty thousand British immigrants arrived in the state between 1910 and the outbreak of war in 1914 and Neville assisted both in their selection in England and Scotland and in the organisation of reception facilities, accommodation and employment on their arrival in Western Australia. Neville continued as Secretary
of this sub-department until after the war, although his duties were
greatly curtailed due to the decline in immigration levels during
the war years.

Following the outbreak of war, Neville was appointed Secretary
of the Patriotic Relief Fund in Western Australia and his duties
included liaising with local councils and roads boards to create
employment for workers made redundant by the war effort. Although
he resigned from this post on becoming Chief Protector, he remained
Chairman of the Permanent Relief Committee of the Fund until it closed
in 1923 and assisted in the distribution of allotments of land to
returned soldiers and the organisation of special medical and dental
services for them, as well as the provision of relief for war widows
and their families. ⑥¹

Neville was a man of vitality and determination and his energy
and skills as an administrator were officially recognised in two
important joint appointments during his term as Chief Protector.
From 1920 to 1926 he held the position of Secretary of the Department
of the North West and in 1933 he was appointed Assistant Under-
Secretary in the Chief Secretary's Department.*

Neville had many interests in his private life. He was a regular
lay reader in the Perth Anglican Church where he also sang tenor
in the choir. He was also an active Freemason.** He enjoyed garden-
ing and reading and he and his wife shared a keen interest in golf.
As Chief Protector he developed an interest in the history of
Aborigines in Western Australia and also became a keen amateur

* The Colonial Secretary's Department was renamed the Chief
  Secretary's Department in 1923.

** The Freemasons are one of the longest established societies in
  Western Australia. The first lodge was founded in the state in
  1843 and by 1912 the number of lodges had grown to 94 with a member-
  ship of 4,000, amongst them many influential political and public
  service figures including the Colonial Secretary, John Drew (Battye,
  1912).
anthropologist. In 1920 he was appointed as the local correspondent for the Royal Anthropological Society and over the years published a number of articles on Aboriginal history.* He continued to write after his retirement and in 1944 published *Australia's Coloured Minority* in which he expounded his views on Aboriginal policy and administration.** He was something of an amateur explorer (he was one of the first honorary members of the prestigious Adventurers Club of Long Beach, California), an interest he was able to pursue during his regular tours of inspection for the Department in remote areas of the state.

Although Neville was to tell the Moseley Royal Commission in 1934 that he had accepted the position of Chief Protector unwillingly, he nevertheless devoted himself to his duties. He quickly introduced an element of vitality and determination into the administration of the Department and injected a new strength into the position of Chief Protector. He became an ardent fighter for what he saw as the Aboriginal cause and his son John Neville recalls that:

The welfare of the aborigines was his overriding thought...he actually and consciously admired them as people....He was one of the first prominent men in Western Australia to do so...to try to raise their cause and fight for it. 62

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* These included an overview of the history of Aborigines in Western Australia published for the State Centenary in 1979, a study of relations between Aborigines and settlers during the early days of the colonisation of the state (1936) and an examination of the contributory causes of the decline in the Aboriginal population in Western Australia (1948).

** Neville also published a number of articles in newspapers and journals expounding his views on administration and policy. His newspaper articles appeared largely during the 1920s and early 1930s and will be discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. An article published by Neville in the *Civil Service Journal* in 1929 looked at the "care of the native" and an article published in *Mankind* in 1951 focussed on the part-Aboriginal population.
During his administration Neville became increasingly concerned about the part-Aboriginal population, particularly in the southwest. He felt that, generally speaking, the "full-bloods" were "better left alone" and while provision should be made for their physical comfort, no attempt should be made to civilise them. He believed that in due course they would eventually die out. However, Neville believed that part-Aborigines "would make as good a citizen as anybody else" and it was his ambition to "raise them to that stage".63 To this end he advocated the extension of Departmental control over virtually all persons of Aboriginal descent and the introduction of legislation to enable the Department to strictly isolate and control part-Aborigines while they were subjected to the process of assimilation. In 1944 he summarised the essence of his policy as follows:

The native must be helped in spite of himself!
Even if a measure of discipline is necessary
it must be applied, but it can be applied
in such a way as to appear to be gentle
persuasion...the end in view will justify
the means employed. 64

As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, Neville exerted a profound influence on policy and practices in Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia, an influence which was evidenced in evolving official policies in relation to part-Aborigines and increasing government interference in the lives of part-Aborigines in the south. He also built up a reputation nationally as a leading authority on the administration of Aboriginal affairs and during the 1930s his strict absorptionist views influenced policies in several states and in the Federal sphere. However Neville came to represent something quite different to Aborigines. Through his regular tours of inspection and his personal interference in the lives of Aborigines
throughout the state he became widely known and recognised by Aborigines. For them "Mister Neville" became the symbol of the system of authoritarianism and control under which they were obliged to live. In 1928 the Aboriginal spokesman, William Harris, described Neville as one of the "worst enemies of Aborigines" and added that Aborigines "had no time for the Chief Protector and were afraid of him". An Aboriginal woman harking back to those days commented that it was "a wonder nobody didn't pick up a gun and shoot him. It's true 'cos nobody liked him"."65

These memories reflected later developments. In 1915 Neville was still a novice in Aboriginal affairs and during his early years of "apprenticeship" he was strongly influenced by Underwood and his own administrative background. He adopted Underwood's anti-mission stance and his wage scheme for Aboriginal employees and strongly supported Underwood's plans to reorganise the Department and reduce expenditure. Neville and Underwood proved a formidable combination and together they developed and clarified the native settlement scheme which was to dominate Departmental policy and practice in the south until the early 1950s and which formed the cornerstone of Neville's administration in the south. The scheme had its roots in Gale's original settlement scheme and provided a compromise between the demands of the southern white residents for the exclusion of Aborigines from the wider community, the continuing demand for Aboriginal labour in the south, and Neville's and Underwood's concern to devise a solution involving an absolute minimum of expenditure.

The scheme was seemingly self-contradictory: based on the segregation of Aborigines in the south on government-run farming settlements, it had as its ultimate aim their absorption into the wider community. This was to be achieved by isolating children from
their parents within the settlements and bringing them up to follow a European lifestyle as well as training them in domestic and farm work. This was intended to enable them to find employment and acceptance outside the settlements. The trainees were to be sent out to approved employers under the supervision of the Department and the first batches of trainees were to be allowed to return to the settlement when they were unemployed. However, Neville was convinced that as the young people gained acceptance in the wider community and as the older people at the settlements died off, the settlements would eventually become redundant and could be closed down within two to three generations. This use of the settlements as "clearing houses" (a term used by Neville) meant that in the long run the Department would be relieved of the expense of supporting an enduring segregated population of Aborigines at the settlements.

In the interim, all Aborigines in the south were to come under the direct control of the Department and the settlements were to become the focus of their lives. Those adults who were totally dependent on the Department for their maintenance (the elderly and the sick) were to remain permanently at the settlements while those adults who could earn a living outside were to continue to do so. However, their families were to be domiciled at the settlements and they were to move there themselves when they were not employed. This would relieve the Department of the expense of supporting able workers and provide employers with continued access to Aboriginal labour. At the same time it would prevent unemployed Aborigines from con-gregating in the town camps. While at the settlements the able-bodied adults were required to work for their keep. Initially they were to provide cheap labour for the development of the settlement facilities and agricultural activities and, once the settlements were
fully operational, they and the older trainees were to ensure that the settlements achieved self-sufficiency. This would relieve the Department of part of the expense of rationing Aborigines at the settlements and would also counter criticisms that the Department intended to keep large numbers of Aborigines in idleness at the settlements.

Although the native settlement scheme suited the needs of the Department, it contained obvious fundamental flaws which, over the years, were to work against its stated aims. These included its failure to take into account the wishes and interests of the Aborigines it was designed to affect and the continuing racism of the white community which militated against the acceptance of the trainees into the wider community. In addition, the inappropriateness of institutional settings for training Aborigines to become members of the wider community had already been shown in the operation of the children's missions in the south. These and other flaws will be discussed in greater detail later.

The partnership of Underwood and Neville was interrupted by the defeat of the Scaddon Labor government in July 1916 and their plan to introduce a minimum wage in the pastoral industry in that year was thereby thwarted. Hal Colebatch, Colonial Secretary in the Wilson Liberal government, took over the portfolio of Aboriginal Affairs and, although he adopted a more conciliatory approach to the missions and the pastoralists, his brief period as Minister did little to affect the trends developing in the Department. When Underwood returned in November 1917 as a member of the Lefroy National ministry, he did not pursue the matter of a minimum wage for Aboriginal workers and this was probably due to pressure from his more conservative National party colleagues. However, Neville continued to push for
this without success throughout his term as Chief Protector.

The Department

Neville began by devoting his considerable administrative skills and experience to developing a systematic set of records for the Department. As a novice in Aboriginal affairs, this also provided him with ready access to the information required to carry out his duties. In 1915 he introduced a centralised card system to provide ready access to statistical data on the issue of rations, blankets and clothing, the number of permits, agreements, recognizances, gun licences and exemptions issued in the state, Aboriginal convictions generally and any breaches by Aborigines or whites of the 1905 Act, and Aboriginal marriages and deaths. Standardised forms were prepared for the use of protectors and police in collecting data on the size of local Aboriginal populations, their health, general conduct and employment, and these details were compiled and published in the Department's Annual Reports commencing in 1918.67 The practice of keeping personal files on individual Aborigines was also initiated by Neville. These changes added a more professional air to the Department and allowed for better organisation and planning as well as increasing supervision over the activities of protectors and police at the local level. Most importantly, the practice of keeping personal dossiers on Aborigines served to increase Departmental knowledge of and control over the lives of Aboriginal people.

Neville was not content to remain at his desk and rely on reports and he maintained Gale's practice of making regular tours of inspection, extending this to include the southern districts as well. He also saw personally to the appointment of protectors in all districts and, consequently, the number of officially appointed
protectors grew from forty-seven in 1914 to seventy-two in 1919. The number of women protectors (first appointed under Gale following objections from women's organisations in Perth to the inspection of Aboriginal women for venereal disease by the police) was increased to five by 1920. In 1919 Neville recommended that the state be divided into distinct administrative areas, each assigned to a single protector. However, this was not done until 1936 when the Department was grafted on to the administrative divisions of the Police Department.

Neville was determined to see Aborigines throughout the state coming under the "protection" of the Department and he instructed all protectors and police to rigorously enforce the provisions of the 1905 Act. In his 1917 Annual Report Neville expressed concern at the "general ignorance" of the legislation and wrote that he had been obliged to

...call the attention of the public to the fact that aborigines [were] protected by law, and that the provisions of the Act, which had in some cases become a dead letter would in future have to be observed.

He was particularly concerned to extend greater protection to Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal women. He was shocked to learn in 1917 that many protectors and police were unaware that all such women over the age of sixteen were to be employed under the provisions of the Act and he instructed them to implement this immediately, further ordering that in future no female employees were to be sent from the country to work in Perth. In 1920 he recommended amendments to the 1905 Act to further prevent miscegenation.

* All women protectors were in the north of the state.
Neville also sought to extend the employment provisions to all Aboriginal workers. Figures collected by the Department in 1916 indicated that only one-third of Aborigines in the state were legally employed while in the south only thirty-four were employed under permit or agreement. In the same year Neville instructed all protectors and police to enforce the employment provisions and further regulations were gazetted to tighten up the system. The regulations followed the precedent of placing stricter controls over access to Aboriginal labour and increasing the accountability of local protectors to the Department. The police were to play a crucial role in this system and this served to further increase their powers at the local level. All current permits and agreements were to be cancelled and in future all applications to employ were to be made through the local police. The officer-in-charge was to prepare a report on the suitability of each prospective employer and the report and application were to be forwarded to the nearest protector. All applicants were to be informed of the protector's decisions through the local police. In practice the police were usually also local protectors and carried out all of these operations themselves. From 1916 all agreements and permits to employ Aborigines on land were to expire on June 30th each year (regardless of when they were taken out) and protectors throughout the state were required to retain copies of all permits, agreements and recognizances issued, renewed or cancelled during the year and were to forward copies of these documents to the Chief Protector.

Neville's innovations had the desired effect. Within a year the number of Aborigines employed under the Act had doubled and in the southwest alone two hundred Aborigines were reported to be employed under permit or agreement. There is no record of
opposition from local employers to these measures and this was probably due to the increased demand for Aboriginal workers during the war years as white labourers and farmers enlisted in the armed forces and immigration ground to a halt. A good number of Aborigines also attempted to enlist but those Aborigines of the full descent were prevented from doing so under Commonwealth law and the military authorities themselves were opposed to the enlistment of part-Aborigines. When Neville had suggested the formation of a special corp of Aboriginal soldiers, the army replied that their "services were not required". The enlistment of part-Aborigines was "not favourably entertained" as it was alleged that the few who had been allowed to enlist and fight overseas had been "unable to stand the strain". Nevertheless a number of part-Aborigines from the south managed to enlist and, although some were ordered out of the training camps when their racial background was detected, others went on to fight overseas, several earning official recognition for bravery. Others died in action in the trenches in France.* Meanwhile, those who remained behind provided a valuable labour pool for rural employers.

Although Neville failed in his attempts to introduce a minimum wage for Aboriginal workers and to have wages due to Aborigines placed at the disposal of the Department, he devised other ways of indirectly forcing employers to contribute to the maintenance of Aborigines

* Five men from the Kickett family fought in France during World War I and one was killed in action there. Corporal Augustus Farmer fought in the 16th Battalion in France and took part in battles at Bullecourt, Langincourt, Ypres and Merricourt. He was killed in action at Merricourt and was awarded a posthumous medal for bravery. Frederick Smith fought at the European front from 1915 to 1918 in the Australian Imperial Forces and he was remembered as a "splendid soldier" (Tilbrook, 1983).
in the state. The 1916 Regulations introduced the following fees for permits and agreements taken out by employers of Aborigines: 2/6d for a single permit or agreement (this was increased to five shillings in 1917) and £2 for a general permit to employ. At the same time the Department began to play a more active role in the employment of Aborigines and, after the establishment of the settlements, it assumed the additional role of employment agency for employers seeking Aboriginal workers. Neville used his powers to manage the property of Aborigines under the 1905 Act by encouraging employers to forward part of wages due to their Aboriginal employees to the Department to be deposited in individual Trust Accounts. This money was to be used to provide for the wage earner and his or her dependants in a "regularised manner".77 This also served to ensure that Aborigines were in fact paid wages due to them and, by using his powers to impose conditions on permits and agreements, Neville was able to insist that Aborigines were paid at levels which he considered suitable. While employers were not legally obliged to enter into these arrangements, the Department was able to pressure many into agreeing to them through its power to deny objecting employers access to Aboriginal labour. By 1919 there were already fifty-three Trust Accounts in operation with deposits totalling £1,155/5/4d.78 While these innovations suited the aims of the Department, they acted as a disincentive to employers to take on Aboriginal workers and during the economic recession of the post-war years they seriously affected Aborigines' ability to earn a living. At the same time the Aborigines objected to increasing Departmental interference in their employment and control over their earnings in particular. The practice of keeping Trust Accounts for Aboriginal workers grew rapidly during the 1920s and many Aborigines later
claimed, apparently with justification, that the money was never returned to them.

Neville's determination to apply the Act to all Aborigines was expressed in the increasingly inflexible attitude of the Department to applications for exemption. Neville's concerns in relation to the exemptions were evident in the standardised form issued to police for reports on applicants. In addition to providing details on the applicant's name, age, occupation and marital status, the police were required to forward detailed information on their racial background, their association with Aborigines and their drinking habits, and they were to assess whether the applicant had "a good character" and whether he was "likely to introduce alcohol amongst other natives or half-castes". Of these factors, alcohol remained the major consideration. 79

Exemptions were rarely granted and eight applications received by the Department in 1919 were all rejected on the grounds that the applicants were "alcoholics". 80 Any applicant with a previous minor alcohol-related conviction was automatically refused exemption. In 1919 a contractor from the Wagen district applied for the exemption of a fifty-six year old Aboriginal man in his employ, stating it was "hard" that when they went to town he stayed in "a bed at a hotel" while his employee had to "sleep out". However, the man had three minor alcohol-related convictions on his record and the application was immediately rejected. 81

Even a favourable police report could not ensure a positive response from the Department. James Edward Coyne, who worked as shepherd, teamster, fencing contractor and general labourer in the Ravensthorpe district, applied for exemption in 1916. Stating that he desired the "full rights and liability of a full-Born Australian
subject of His Majesty King George V", he implored the government to free him from the "disability" of coming under the 1905 Act. Although his application had the full support of the Ravensthorpe police, Neville rejected it as the police stated that Coyne mixed with Aborigines and Neville therefore assumed there was a "danger" that Coyne would supply them with alcohol. Persons of part-Aboriginal descent who did not associate with Aborigines also had little chance of getting exemption. In 1917 James Yates, a mission-educated part-Aboriginal, also from the Ravensthorpe district, wrote requesting exemption. The police described him as "respectable" and stated that he did not associate with Aborigines but again Neville refused to grant him exemption from the Act. When Yates wrote back seeking an explanation and querying whether he in fact came under the Act, Neville replied that as a "half-caste" he came under certain sections of the Act, particularly those pertaining to the supply of alcohol, regardless of whether or not he associated with Aborigines. Neville took a particularly unsympathetic attitude to applications from Aborigines attached to New Norcia, reflecting his growing conflict with mission authorities there. When David Biggs, a labourer at New Norcia, applied for exemption in 1916 Neville rejected his application and wrote on his file "we have hitherto refused all applications from natives and half-castes residing at this place". An application from Eddie Domber Williams, a part-Aboriginal farmer in the Tambellup district, in 1919, showed the extreme inconvenience that exclusion from hotels could cause in a small country town. The doctor's consulting rooms were situated in the Tambellup Hotel and when Williams attempted to see the doctor there he was ordered away. The Department showed no sympathy for his situation and his application was rejected.
Applications for exemption during this period show that the police were implementing the legislation as if it applied to any person of Aboriginal descent. In 1917 Alex Cox, a "literate quarter-caste" from Cranbrook who had two brothers fighting in France, applied for exemption. Neville noted on the file that as Cox was a "quarter-caste" he was legally exempt from the provisions of the 1905 Act, but, instead of relaying this information to Cox, Neville simply informed him that, due to his failure to supply further details on his background, the Department would no longer be able to assist him in his enquiries. It appears that the police were even applying the legislation to coloured persons of non-Aboriginal descent who associated with Aborigines and the Department received several applications for exemption from persons of black American and even Mexican descent during this period. They were generally informed that they were exempt from the provisions of the Act.

The racial background of many of the part-Aboriginal applicants was often so complex that Neville was obliged to seek the advice of the Crown Law Department and the subsequent legal decisions often created strange anomalies as well as hardships for the families involved. One man was informed that as a "quadroon" he was exempt from the Act, however his wife, a "half-caste", was not, while their children, being "octaroons" were, like their father, exempt from the Act. In rare cases where the father had exemption and the entire family came under the Act, the Department took the attitude that while the family members were still living at home they too were exempt from the Act, but that once they left home they were to come under the provisions of the Act.
The Native Settlements

The focus of Neville's administration from 1915 to 1920 was the development of native settlements in the south. The Department's official commitment to the scheme began with the appointment of a Superintendent at Carrolup in June 1915 and in the following year the Carrolup Reserve was expanded from seven hundred to ten thousand acres to enable it to develop into a self-supporting agricultural settlement.89 * From 1915 Neville began to push for the establishment of a second settlement to take in Aborigines from the area stretching from Gin Gin in the south to Northampton in the north (where he estimated there were four hundred Aborigines, one hundred and twenty of whom were in receipt of rations) as well as part-Aboriginal children from the Murchison district. He recommended the creation of a ten thousand acre reserve on the Moore River in the vicinity of the Mogumber railway siding and suggested a traditional camping ground known as Palm Flats as a suitable site for the settlement compound.90 Neville's proposal was agreed to by the Colonial Secretary in 1917. However, due to complications in the transfer of the land** the settlement was not opened until April 1918.*** Neville played the major role in the establishment of the settlements

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* For further details on the gazetting of Carrolup Reserve see Appendix II.

** The proposed reserve area included two homestead blocks and conditional purchase land partly owned by a soldier fighting at the European front and the Department encountered considerable difficulty in contacting him to negotiate the resumption of the land (AR/1917).

*** For further details on the gazetting of the Moore River Reserve see Appendix II.
and once they were operational he maintained a close supervisory role over their activities. In spite of various criticisms, he remained convinced that the settlements were the "solution" to the situation of the Aborigines in the south.

**Funding for the Native Settlements**

The government did not provide any additional funding for the development of the settlements. Indeed, the Department's annual grant was reduced steadily from 1915, reaching its lowest level in thirteen years in 1916 when it fell to £24,751.\(^1\) This reflected the drain of state revenue to the war effort and the Labor government's determination to keep expenditure on Aborigines to a minimum. This did not deter Neville. He was convinced that funding for the settlements could be found through strict economy and the absorption of items of expenditure within the Department. Neville's subsequent administrative changes led to significant changes in the Department's ration system and to the closure of the children's missions. The changes also had long-term adverse implications for Aborigines in the south.

Expenditure on rations was reduced by £2,000 between 1915 and 1917 and the total number of Aborigines receiving rations in the state fell by two hundred. The increased employment available to Aborigines during the war years contributed to this but the major factors were the introduction of stricter controls over the issue of rations and the centralisation of ration issue in the settlements in the south. In 1916 the ration lists were inspected to ensure that only those persons physically incapable of working were receiving rations and from 1917 rations were issued only on Mondays to prevent Aborigines from doubling up at different depots.\(^2\) Neville was certain that the centralisation of the issue of rations in the settle-
ments would reduce the ration bill and in 1915 he calculated that the closure of four ration depots in the wheat belt alone would save the Department £800 a year. At the same time he was determined to build up the settlement populations and ration depots were deliberately closed down to force Aborigines into the settlements. Between 1917 and 1920 the number of ration depots in the south fell from twenty to six (excluding the settlements). Farm produce grown to meet the needs of the settlement populations served to further reduce the ration bill and, together with the introduction of the manufacture of garments at the settlements for distribution to Aborigines throughout the state, this led to considerable savings for the Department. This changeover to the provision of relief in centralised institutions represented a fundamental change in Departmental practice in the south and marked the culmination of attempts by the Department from the turn of the century to reduce expenditure on rations and to increase control over the issue of rations. There is a striking parallel between these changes and events in Britain following the introduction of the Poor Laws in Britain during the eighteenth century. These laws did away with the practice of providing "outdoor relief" (rations, blankets and clothing) to the poor in their own parishes and instead they were forced to live in centralised "workhouses" where they were fed and clothed at a minimum cost and forced to contribute to their maintenance. Like the poor of Victorian England, destitute Aborigines in the south were wrenched out of their homes and forced to live away from their family and

* Long (1970) makes this point in relation to institutions for Aborigines generally in Australia. There are also many parallels between the workhouses of Victorian England and the settlements in south western Australia.
friends in drab institutions. They were denied access to superior facilities and services available "on the outside" and robbed of the right to participate in the wider community.

Expenditure on missions was halved between 1915 and 1920* and in the south this was achieved by gradually phasing the missions out of their role with the children who were sent to the settlements instead. This reflected Neville's policy of building up the settlement populations, besides which he was convinced that the children could be accommodated more "economically" at the settlements than at the missions. Most importantly, the Department could not afford to subsidise the missions and promote the development of the settlements and Neville was convinced that the money allocated for the education of Aboriginal children should be spent on practical and vocational training instead of the promotion of Christianity. After restoring the subsidies to the Protestant children's missions early in 1915, Underwood announced that in future only those children sent by the Department would be subsidised and that the missions would be regularly inspected to ensure that this was strictly carried out.

In the same year the Department began to send children to the settlement at Carrolup and this practice was extended to Moore River from 1918.

Ellensbrook was the first children's mission to close, ceasing to operate in 1917. In the following year the AAM authorities began to transfer children from the Dulhi Cunyah Orphanage in Perth to Carrolup and in 1919 the orphanage was closed. By 1920 there were only fifteen children remaining at the SNHC Home and its annual

* Expenditure on subsidies for missions dropped from £2,727 in 1914 to £1,316 in 1920 (Biskup, 1973).
subsidy had dropped to £121/6/8d. At the end of the year the Orphanage Committee informed the Department that

...owing to the opening up of the native reserves by the Government and the decision not to send any more native and half-caste children to the Swan Mission it has been reluctantly decided to close the institution.

The children were sent out to service or to Moore River. New Norcia was the only one to survive and in 1919 there were still seventy-five children at its orphanages. Ten of the children were subsidised by the Department at an annual rate of £7 per child (its subsidy was restored in 1917 on the insistence of Colebatch), thirty-five were provided for out of profits from mission agriculture, and the remainder were supported by their parents or guardians. Over the years New Norcia continued to provide institutional care for a small number of Aboriginal children.

The closure of the children's missions represented a fundamental change of policy in the south. The missions had played the major role in "Christianising and civilising" Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children from the 1840s. This now became the province of the state

* In 1919 Colebatch instructed Neville to review the system of mission subsidies with a view to making it more equitable. In his subsequent report Neville recommended that those missions which had received large grants of land from the government with the object of their becoming self-supporting should contribute equally with the Department to the maintenance of those children sent in by the Department. Missions in this category located north of the 26th parallel should receive an annual subsidy of £5 per child, while those in the south should receive £7. Missions located on small blocks of land and which were unable to become self-supporting should receive an annual subsidy of £14 for each child sent in by the Department. Neville's proposal was adopted in 1917. New Norcia fell in the first category and this meant that its subsidy was to be restored although the Department refused to support more than seven children each year. The other Protestant children's missions fell into the second category. There was no change in their subsidy level except in the case of Dulhi Gunyah where funding for the teacher was discontinued and instead the mission was to be subsidised at the same rate as the other Protestant children's missions (A/295/1928).
and missionary activity in the south was confined to a "guiding spiritual influence" in the settlements. Neville allowed the missionaries of the Australian Aborigines Mission to retain an involvement with the Carrolup settlement, while the Anglican Church was to carry on mission work at Moore River, despite the long history of Roman Catholic involvement with Aborigines in the area.* This did little to improve the already strained relations between the church authorities and the Department. For the children at the missions the Department's actions meant further dislocation, and one woman who recalled being sent as a child from Busselton to Dulhi Gunyah and then to Carrolup commented that she did not "know why they sent us all the way down there".\textsuperscript{101} As will be discussed later, state control also led to a rapid deterioration in standards of institutional care and training provided for Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children in the south. The Department's brief flirtation with separate schools for Aboriginal children in the southern rural towns ended in 1918 with the closure of the Beverley School. As with the missions, funding for the school was reallocated to the settlements.\textsuperscript{102} With the continued exclusion of Aboriginal children from most state schools in the south this left the settlements as virtually their only avenue to receive an education.

Neville's efforts in reallocating funding proved most successful and he was able to report in his 1920 Annual Report that the development of the settlements was achieved without any overall increase in Departmental expenditure.

* It was not until the late 1930s that Roman Catholic priests were allowed to hold services at Moore River Settlement.
Plan of Moore River Settlement Compound

Road to Mogumber

- Bakehouse and kitchen
- Dining room
- School
- Laundry
- Store
- Girls dormitory
- Nurses and teachers quarters
- Boys dormitory
Establishing the Settlements

The plan for the lay-out of the settlements was simple. Staff quarters, dormitories for the older children and trainees, and the settlement facilities were located in a central area called "the compound" and within walking distance of this was a cleared camping area for the adults. The compound and the camp were surrounded by the settlement's farming and pastoral land and a small dirt road linked the settlement to the outside world. Each settlement also had a cemetery and a "detention room" for the punishment of Aboriginal residents.

The lay-out of the settlements reflected the different roles of the three main groups of people living there and their relative importance in the eyes of the Department. The white staff appointed to run the settlements lived in houses in the compound close to the settlement facilities and the children who were the focus of their attention. The Superintendent was responsible for the administration of the settlement and the general welfare of the Aborigines and he was assisted by his wife, the Matron, and the Farm Assistant who supervised the agricultural activities and organised the men into work groups. Other staff, including a teacher, nurse, sewing mistress and children's assistants, were appointed at the settlements from 1917. The children and young unmarried adults lived in dormitories away from the other Aboriginal adults and were expected to spend their time within the confines of the compound where they attended school and were trained to work around the compound and on the settlement farm. Eventually they were to go out to work in the wider community. The Aboriginal adults were secondary to the long-term goals of the Department, although their labour was essential for the development of the settlements and to a lesser extent for their
continued operation. Those adults who were capable of supporting themselves and whose services were not required at the settlement were encouraged to go out to work while the sick and elderly folk were left to survive in the camp in make-shift huts, mia-mias and tents.

The first staff appointed at Carrolup Native Settlement were AAM missionaries. Annie Lock continued to work with the children until a teacher was appointed in 1917.* The first Superintendent, W.J. Fryer, appointed in April 1915, was formerly manager of the Dulhi Cunyah Orphanage. He was an unfortunate choice. He and his wife were unable to control the children and they resorted to cruel punishments such as chaining the children to the legs of tables. Such actions confirmed Neville's views as to the unsuitability of missionaries for this work and when Fryer resigned in 1918, after being threatened with dismissal for maltreating a child, Neville appointed a non-missionary, J.B. Blake, in his place. By contrast, the first Superintendent at Moore River Settlement, E.C. Mitchell, was a farmer from the Northam district who had lived in the Gascoyne district between 1888 and 1902, probably as a pastoralist. He was said to have had a good understanding of Aboriginal ways and a familiarity with a number of Aboriginal languages, and in evidence to the Moseley Royal Commission into the condition of Aborigines in the state in 1934, he spoke knowledgeably on Aboriginal traditions and kinship structures in the north.

* Annie Lock moved to the AAM mission on Sunday Island in the north in 1917 and during the 1930s she was working as a missionary in the Ooldea district in South Australia (Wilf Douglas, private communication).
Neville was initially confident that Aborigines would move voluntarily to the settlements. However, it soon became obvious that while some local Aboriginal families were willing to camp there, those from other districts had no intention of leaving their homes and breaking their ties with their families, friends and birth places. There was little to attract them to the settlements. With the outbreak of war and the increased demand for their services as farm labourers, most Aborigines were able to find employment in their home districts or runs, but they had little hope of doing so in a new area where they had no contacts with local farmers. In addition, they were only to be paid in kind for their work at the settlements while they could demand good wages on the outside. Living conditions at the settlements offered little improvement on their own camps and in many cases were distinctly inferior. Furthermore, Aborigines were unwilling to exchange the freedom of their existing lifestyle for Departmental control. There was little incentive during the early years to send their children to the settlements to be educated. Carrolup School was not opened until 1917 and there was no school at Moore River prior to 1920. Parents also faced the prospect of losing their children to the control of the settlement staff and the Department once they were placed in the compound and taught to reject their parents and their way of life. The punishments meted out to the children by the white staff shocked Aboriginal parents and as rumours began to spread about this and conditions at the settlements many people refused outright to go or took to the bush to avoid being forcibly sent there.

As has been indicated, children under the legal guardianship of the Chief Protector and persons dependent on rations had little choice in the matter. In addition to the children from the missions,
children were sent in from various parts of the south and by 1917 there were sixty children at Carrolup from Gnowangerup, Beverley, Esperance, Narrogin, Kellerberrin and Guildford. They included a few children who were sent in by their parents to be educated on condition that the children were returned to them when they turned fourteen (the Department does not appear to have honoured these agreements). Elderly people were particularly vulnerable and their removal to the settlements often had tragic results. Abraham, an elderly man camped on the outskirts of Northam with no one to care for him, was sent to Carrolup in January 1916 and, old and homesick, he died just one week later. Meanwhile, workers experiencing difficulties supporting their dependants frequently acceded to the demands of the Department that they send them in to the settlements. Abraham Foot was working in the Picton district in 1915, supporting two women at his camp and his crippled mother who was living on her own at Narrogin. The Department insisted that his mother be moved to Carrolup and Foot reluctantly agreed to this and the suggestion that the two women from his camp be sent there as well. During the immediate post-war years increasing numbers of Aborigines found themselves out of work as farmers returned from the war to work their own land and returned soldiers were given preference in employment. The only alternative for many Aborigines was to move to the settlements.

Aborigines who refused to move to the settlements were increasingly sent in under Ministerial warrant by the Department. This was a relatively simple administrative procedure. The Department forwarded the names of the Aborigines to the Minister who then issued warrants enabling the police or protectors to remove them to the settlements. There appear to have been no recorded instances of
Ministers refusing to authorise the removal of Aborigines as recommended by the Department. The Aborigines had no right to appeal against the Minister's decisions and once they were at the settlements they were virtually prisoners. They could not leave the settlement reserve without the permission of the Minister and there was no limitation on the length of time they could be detained there. Regulations under the 1905 Act introduced in 1919 on Neville's initiative, served to facilitate the removal of Aborigines to the settlements by allowing police to send them in without due process of the law.  

The first Aborigines at Carrolup were from the camp at Katanning and while they appeared to have been willing to use the camp as their base, people from Quairading, Kellerberrin, Beverley and Gnowangerup showed little interest in Neville's suggestion in 1915 that they move to the settlement. The Quairading Aborigines refused outright to go. Those camped at Beverley sent two scouts to Carrolup (at the Department's expense) but their reports must have been unfavourable as none moved to the settlement. Early in 1916 Neville sent Major Doodjep, an Aboriginal living at Carrolup, to Wickepin to encourage the forty or so Aborigines living there, who were reported to be "living a precarious life", to move to the settlement. Twenty-two subsequently walked to Carrolup but only nine were still there by the middle of the year. To prevent them from moving back to Wickepin, Neville ordered the immediate closure of the town ration station. In the previous year, on Neville's initiative, the Busselton police sent a group of Aborigines from the town camp to Carrolup to work for local farmers. Their impressions must have been bleak. When Neville visited the Busselton camp in 1916 he found the camp deserted and discovered that the Aborigines, on hearing
of his visit, had taken to the bush in fear of being sent back to Carrolup. 110

The first Aborigines at Moore River were sent there under Ministerial warrant from camps in Beechboro and Lockridge on the outskirts of Perth. From 1916 there were several complaints from white residents about conditions in the camps and the Department was also concerned at reports of epidemics of measles and associated complications of bronchitis and pneumonia amongst Aborigines there. In 1918 Neville instructed the local police to order the Aborigines to move to Moore River. They refused to go and Miss Phillips, an AAM missionary who had been working in these camps since 1915, told the Department that this was based on rumours that Aborigines at the settlements were half-starved and that when they attempted to get food from the store they were whipped away by the Superintendent. Neville immediately applied for seventeen Ministerial warrants for their removal, but when the police arrived at the camps armed with the warrants they found that most of the Aborigines had taken to the bush. However, one young mother, Annie Calgaret (formerly of the SNHC Home and one of the first part-Aboriginal children from the Home to attend high school) was in such desperate straits following the recent death of her husband that she had already moved to the settlement with her three small daughters.* Those remaining in the camp were rounded up and put on the train for Mogumber. Amongst them was Ngilgie, formerly of Welshpool Reserve. She was dismayed to learn that she had to leave her poultry and personal effects behind and that her collection of thirty dogs (made famous in Daisy Bates'...

* Mrs Irene Farrell was one of these little girls. She remained at the settlement until the late 1930s and her memories of settlement life are presented in Appendix I, Interview Three.
articles), which she had jealously guarded from the police over the years, were to be shot. In the same year police rounded up Aborigines at Beverley following complaints from white townspeople about the lack of sanitation in the camps and sent them to Moore River. Amongst them was Mrs Jane Ugle, who just nine years before had been living comfortably with her family on her husband's farm near Pingelly. Ration stations at Bolgart, Nungarin and Northampton were also closed down and Aborigines there sent to the settlement. From 1919 Neville arranged for several Aborigines convicted of alcohol related offences to be sent to Moore River settlement for "rehabilitation". This followed, to some extent, the earlier reformatory principle behind Rottnest Island Prison. It was also in keeping with earlier Departmental policy: already in 1913 Chief Protector Gale had bemoaned the fact the the Department had "no home of detention for criminally intended natives and half-castes".

In 1920 the average monthly population at Moore River was 193 and at Carrolup 150. These figures included both permanent residents and those using the settlement as a base between jobs. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide exact figures for the number of Aborigines moved to the settlements between 1915 and 1920 but the records suggest that around 500 Aborigines were involved. In keeping with Departmental policy at the time, these people were predominantly from the south (although this changed during the 1920s when the settlements began to take in Aborigines from all over the state) and this meant that approximately one quarter of the Aboriginal population in the south was sent to the settlements during this period. Needless to say, this emptied the town camps and it represented a further major change in the distribution of Aborigines in the south. At the same time this was far below what Neville had
Ration Day, Carrolup Native Settlement, c. 1920
intended. Lack of funding and land, and the resistance of the Aborigines to being sent to the settlements prevented the wholesale removal of the Aborigines from the wider community.

Neville was also mistaken in believing that the Aborigines would settle down happily at Carrolup and Moore River and come to regard the settlements as their "home". At Carrolup the children cut their way through their canvas-walled dormitories during the night and set off to try to rejoin their parents in the settlement camp or in their home districts. They also stood up to the authoritarianism of Superintendent Fryer and his wife, for which they were harshly punished. Neville intervened in 1916 and ordered Fryer to record all punishments and to forward the details to Head Office each month. The punishments recorded by the Fryers included "six good whacks on the hand" for a ten year old boy who tore the canvas walls of the dormitory, while a fourteen year old girl was given a "good stroke on the hand and a good strapping" for "refusing to obey" and for "hitting Mrs Fryer".115 There was often a significant discrepancy between what was recorded and what actually occurred. Neville was informed by Aborigines at Carrolup that the "good strapping" referred to above was in fact a "stand-up fight" between Mrs Fryer and the girl, and Neville warned Fryer that he should exercise greater caution in punishing the children or they would have "natives leaving the place". Neville further ordered that in future all cases of absconding by children were to be reported to him and he would decide on the appropriate punishment. He suggested that older girls could be dealt with under the 1905 Act (this could lead to imprisonment for up to six months), while uncontrollable children could be transferred to Moore River where their unfamiliarity with the people and the district would act as a deterrent to further absconding.115
Meanwhile, the adults showed little interest in working on building and farming projects at Carrolup. Those who could preferred to take work with local farmers rather than working for rations at the settlement and those left behind were often incapable of strenuous work. Superintendent Fryer also complained that men who went off clearing and shearing for farmers in the district expected the settlement to provide for members of their families who remained behind, and that they objected to suggestions that they should pay for their maintenance themselves.

In 1916, on Neville's initiative, Regulations under the 1905 Act granting sweeping powers to the Superintendents were introduced to enable them to deal with the disciplinary problems with the children and adults. Aborigines at the settlements (referred to in the Regulations as "inmates") were to obey all "reasonable instructions and commands" of the Superintendent and were to carry out all work and duties allotted to them. Those who refused to do so could be denied rations or ordered to leave the settlements. The children were to attend school as directed by the Superintendent and males under the age of fourteen and any unmarried females were to reside in the compound. Certain Aborigines were to be appointed by the Superintendent to assist in maintaining "good order" and "discipline". The Superintendent could inflict summary punishment by way of confinement for up to fourteen days on any inmate and corporal punishment on any inmate to the age of sixteen. The range of behaviour for which the Aborigines could be punished was broadly defined and included misbehaviour, neglect of duty, insubordination, or any breach of the Regulations (such as leaving the settlement without official permission if there under Ministerial warrant or under the legal guardianship of the Chief Protector). The Regulations
further stipulated that unauthorised persons were to be prohibited from entering the settlements and alcohol was not allowed on the settlement reserve. In September 1916 Neville also arranged for the Katanning police to make fortnightly visits to the settlement and the Superintendent subsequently reported that this had proved "very beneficial".

The development of Carrolup progressed following the gazetting of the Regulations and work on the settlement buildings began in earnest. In 1916 a substantial house for the Superintendent and a ration shed were built from bricks and stone made and quarried at the settlement and between 1917 and 1920 a dining room and kitchen were added to the children's dormitories and a stone bakehouse, bathroom, stone school, sewing room, staff quarters and farm sheds were also erected. All of this work was done by the Aboriginal men under the supervision of white tradesmen. The children's dormitories, made of canvas and wood and iron from the old huts at Welshpool Reserve, were abandoned in 1918 and the girls were moved into the school building, while the boys were accommodated in a temporary building intended for use as a sewing room. Meanwhile classes were held in a small building originally used to house sick residents and women in labour. This multiple use of settlement buildings was characteristic of the settlements and as a result the buildings quickly became dilapidated. At the same time these living conditions were distinctly inferior to those provided by the children's missions. It was not until 1921 that sturdy stone dormitories were available for the accommodation of boys and girls at Carrolup.

Aboriginal labour was also used to develop the settlement into a self-supporting farming enterprise. The reserve land fronted onto two rivers, the Carrolup and Carlocatup Rivers, both of which were
One of the Original Buildings at Carrolup, 1978
brackish, and much of the land was of poor quality and covered with noxious weeds. Nevertheless, Neville was convinced that it could support a profitable sheep breeding industry as well as producing sufficient fodder for stock and farm produce in the form of fruit, vegetables and meat to meet the needs of the settlement residents. Two hundred sheep were purchased in 1916 and Aboriginal shepherds (amongst them Stanley Moses, "sergeant" at the Katanning camp in 1914) were appointed to ensure that the sheep did not stray into the many patches of noxious weeds. At the same time twenty-five acres of land were cleared and prepared for cropping while other land was grubbed for noxious weeds and trees were ring-barked. A two acre vegetable garden was also established. Although the heavy winter rains in 1917 slowed progress down, four tons of hay were produced during the year and a profit of £50 was made from wool shorn at the settlement. In 1918 an orchard of two hundred acres was planted and pigs and poultry were also kept. By 1920 almost four hundred acres of land had been cleared, some two hundred acres were under crop and posts were ready to fence in fifteen hundred acres of land. The Aboriginal men had also worked on the main road connecting the settlement to the road to Katanning and in the process had built two bridges, as well as making gravel roads on the settlement. 119

In 1916 a Singer sewing machine was purchased for use at Carrolup and during the year one woman from the camp made all the clothes for the children in the compound. The manufacture of clothing for distribution by the Department to Aborigines throughout the state began in earnest in October 1918 with the appointment of a sewing mistress and the arrival of the first batch of girls from the Dulhi Gunyah Orphanage who were already skilled in sewing. The older girls
from the compound, aged between thirteen and twenty, did the sewing, working an average of three hours a day. Their work led to a 50 per cent reduction in Departmental expenditure on clothing and in 1920 the young women made 7,500 garments. This was more than sufficient for the needs of the Department and Neville began to make arrangements to take in orders from other government departments.

Moore River was planned to operate on a smaller scale than Carrolup and was intended to accommodate two hundred Aborigines, compared to Carrolup's three hundred. The land was of poorer quality and much of the reserve was sand plain, suitable only for sheep raising. There were only three hundred acres of arable land scattered in the plains and along the banks of Moore River. Agricultural development proceeded at a slower rate than at Carrolup and although a local Aboriginal, John Michael, and a white overseer were employed by the Department prior to 1918 to start clearing the land, only 100 acres had been cleared by 1920. Of this, thirty acres were under crop for hay and there was also an orchard and vegetable garden which was tended by an elderly Aboriginal man from the north who grew vegetables to "show standard". The settlement also had a flock of fifty sheep. The buildings were of poorer quality than those at Carrolup as there were no natural building materials on the reserve and in 1919, two years after the Department closed down the Lock Hospitals on Dorre and Bernier Islands, wood and iron from the dismantled hospital buildings were sent down to be used at Moore River. By 1920 the settlement had a Superintendent's house, a cottage for the Farm Assistant, shared quarters for the female staff, boys' and girls' dormitories, a bake and cook house, several temporary farm sheds, a shelter shed for Aborigines in the camp and a school hall which also doubled as a church and concert hall and, on occasion,
Church and School at Moore River Native Settlement
as a hospital. A "village street" had also been prepared along with several gravel paths. As the river water was brackish, several wells were sunk to provide drinking water for Aborigines (the white staff used rain water from tanks). In 1919 a blanket weaving machine was offered to the Department by the Prisons Department and Neville made plans to introduce blanket weaving at Moore River to complement the manufacture of clothing at Carrolup and to further reduce Departmental expenditure. The blankets were to be made from wool produced at the settlement and spun into yarn by the women using traditional spinning techniques. However, there was no building available at the settlement to house the machine and the plan was abandoned.122

At both settlements the young people from the compound and certain approved adults from the camp helped with the work around the compound. The women did washing and cleaning and some, like Annie Calgaret at Moore River, helped the children's attendants in looking after the children and assisted the nurses in delivering babies and tending the sick. At Carrolup two young women from the compound baked all the bread consumed at the settlement and at Moore River this was done by a young man, Nathaniel Thomas Bropho, assisted by two school boys and a man from the camp. Bropho was originally from the Wyndham district and was said to have been sent down to the SNHC Home by the well-known Kimberley pastoralist family, the Duracks. Following the closure of the Home in 1920 he was sent to Moore River and was trained in baking by Superintendent Mitchell. Men from the camps also assisted in butchering meat for the settlement and carting stores from Katanning and Mogumber.

The children at Carrolup initially received rudimentary instruction from Annie Lock. In the mornings the boys and girls did sewing, patching, raffia work and general housework, and in the
Mothers and Children outside camp at Moore River Native Settlement, n.d.
afternoons they had their lessons. Following the completion of the school building in 1917, a teacher was appointed (under the Education Department's conditions) and equipment from the Aboriginal school at Katanning was transferred to the settlement. The school was officially opened in October 1917. From this time the children received instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, English, sewing, raffia work, knitting, recitation, singing and drill, the ultimate aim of this being to fit the children for domestic or farm work, either at the settlement or in employment in the wider community. In 1918 Neville reported that the children at Carrolup were progressing well and that most could now read and write. The appointment of a nurse in the same year had led to a general improvement in the health of the children. The daughter of Superintendent Mitchell was appointed teacher at Moore River in 1920, on completion of the school hall. The settlement schools had basically the same aims as the children's missions, that is, to provide the children with a basic grounding in literacy and numeracy and to prepare them for training as domestic and farm labourers. However, the emphasis was more on "civilising" than "Christianising", while the quality of education was distinctly inferior to that provided by the children's missions. Although the schools were said to have followed the state curriculum, the size of the classes (there were up to sixty children at the Carrolup School and one teacher) and the lack of equipment made this an impossible task.

Staff at Carrolup had continuing problems in controlling the children and in January 1918 Neville recommended the erection of a "place of confinement" for the punishment of the children and a wooden shed was built for this purpose. Children of various ages as well as adults were imprisoned in the "Boob", as it came to be
known, for various misdemeanours. Absconding was the most common reason and Laura Dinah, the fifteen year old daughter of George Jerong Dinah, was imprisoned in the "Boob" for a total of sixty-four days between November 1918 and November 1919 after she repeatedly ran away from the settlement in a desperate effort to rejoin her family at Wagin. Insubordination was another frequent cause of imprisonment and one young man was kept in the "Boob" for eight days on a "reduced diet" for using insulting and threatening language to staff and for "resisting arrest".126

Efforts were also made to change the behaviour and the beliefs and customs of the adults at the settlements. As has been mentioned, certain Aborigines convicted of minor alcohol related offences were sent to Moore River to be "reformed" while all adults were expected to conform to the sedentary and institutionalised way of life at the settlements. They were also expected to attend church each Sunday and from 1917 Neville began to encourage all adults to marry. Although it was not his duty under the 1905 Act, he insisted on deciding on the suitability of couples to marry and he maintained this practice throughout his term as Chief Protector. The Department provided the couples with inexpensive wedding rings (cards showing the various sizes were held in the Superintendent's office and the rings were then ordered from the Department) and assisted with wedding outfits and refreshments after the wedding ceremony. Several couples were frequently married at the same ceremony and this usually brought large numbers of visitors to the settlements.

Entertainment in the form of evening concerts and sports days with football, cricket matches and athletic events were held for the Aborigines and on summer evenings at Carrolup they were invited to sit under the stars to listen to music from an old gramophone.
Wedding at Carrolup Native Settlement, c. 1920
Meanwhile, the Aborigines entertained themselves in traditional ways in the camps, holding corroborees (the Superintendents do not appear to have objected although they were strongly opposed to any ceremonies involving initiation of the young men) and retelling old stories and singing traditional songs around the camp fire at night. Christmas was an important event in the year at the settlement, providing a welcome break from the monotony of institutional life and attracting a large number of visitors from the surrounding district to the settlement. A special Christmas dinner was put on for the Aboriginal residents and gifts (mainly inexpensive sporting and grooming items) were distributed by the Superintendent dressed as Father Christmas.

These visits were frequently followed by epidemics of measles and influenza which brought activity at the settlements to a halt and often led to deaths amongst the elderly residents and the children. In 1919 a virulent form of influenza (known as Spanish Influenza, which decimated populations in post-war Europe) hit the southwest of the state and Neville took immediate precautions to protect Aborigines at Carrolup settlement and, to a lesser extent, those living in town camps in the Great Southern district. Quarantine conditions were introduced at Carrolup: white visitors were not permitted to enter the settlements while Aboriginal visitors were quarantined for seven days before being allowed to move into the camp. All visits by settlements residents to town were to be kept at an absolute minimum. Aboriginal "guards" were placed at entrances to the settlements to ensure that these restrictions were observed. At Carrolup this duty was carried out by Paddy Cattibut, a former employee of Thomas Muir of Deeside, who moved to the settlement with his two children in 1918. At the same time Neville arranged for Aborigines in camps at Mount Barker and Busselton to be vaccinated
against the influenza and a trained nurse was hired to care for sick Aborigines at the Wagin camp. 127

As a result of Neville's efforts, there were only four reported Aboriginal deaths from Spanish Influenza in the south, compared to 150 in government settlements in Queensland. 128 However, Neville received little thanks from the white community for his work. Most white residents in the Great Southern were of the opinion that, rather than providing for the quarantine of Aborigines living at Carrolup, Neville should have rounded up all Aborigines in the area and isolated them from the wider community at Carrolup. This stemmed from prevailing views about Aborigines as "carriers of disease". In August 1919, for example, the Commissioner of Health wrote that Aborigines were more "prone" to Spanish Influenza than other members of the community and that, since the infection "increased in virulence during passage through susceptible Hosts", Aborigines would be responsible for spreading a stronger form of the virus to others. The strongest criticisms of Neville came from the small town of Woodinalling, located to the northeast of Carrolup settlement. Following the death of an Aboriginal in the town from Spanish Influenza in August 1919 and the infection of another local Aboriginal family, the white townspeople had forced the Aborigines out of their camp and ordered them to go to Carrolup. However, because of the strict quarantine at the settlement they were refused entry and were instructed to return to Woodinalling. In October the Woodinalling Roads Board made an angry statement in the Southern District Advocate in which it requested local stores to refuse to serve Aborigines and threatened to take legal action against any Aborigines camped near the town of Woodinalling on the grounds that they constituted a "dangerous menace to whites". 129 The Roads Board also wrote to the local member
of Parliament, S. Stubbs (MLA) demanding that all Aborigines suffering from any illness, whether infectious or not, be sent to Carrolup settlement and that the government hold an inquiry into the treatment of Aborigines with special reference to the policy and administration of Carrolup. In conclusion, the Roads Board stated that "if diseased niggers [were] to be turned adrift amongst white people then the settlement [was] not worth its salt and it [was] time the whole useless farce...was closed down". 30 The Southern District Advocate carried a further story in October on the incident entitled "the Nigger Nuisance", and in November the Sunday Times in Perth indirectly accused Neville of acting without the permission of his Minister in quarantining the settlement, and of making a grave error in his treatment of Aborigines. 131

In his 1919 Annual Report, Neville wrote proudly of the "success" of the "sociological experiment" of the settlements and stated that "in the light of experience already gained" he was "satisfied that the...settlement system [was] the only solution to the native question". 132 In the following year he reported that both settlements were almost self-supporting and that the only obstacle to achieving this goal was the lack of funding to push ahead with building programmes and to purchase fencing wire to promote sheep breeding. He stated that the Aborigines were working well and that this proved that the idea that "natives [could] support themselves by their own labour [was] not a chimerical one". 133 He added that they were doing work that many white people believed they were incapable of carrying out.

Neville also asserted that the Aborigines' overall condition had improved and that they were "healthier and happier than previously". He commented further on the
...complete absence of quarrelling and fighting, the reserves being regarded as common ground when controlled by the Government, the 'Big Boss' protector of all tribes... Most of the natives have a prejudice against being confined in any particular area, but it is remarkable how soon this prejudice disappears when they realise why they were placed there and what the Department is trying to do for their welfare and happiness.  

He noted that there had been a marked improvement in the health of the children and predicted that, equipped with the education and training provided by the settlements, the young men and women would soon be able to move out to live and work in the wider community. Meanwhile, he said, the people looked on the settlements as "Home" and the few allowed out on annual holidays said they were pleased to return and agreed that "Home" was "best after all". Neville also commented on the reformatory value of the settlements claiming that "women who were incorrigible prostitutes" and men who were "drunkards and even murderers"* had settled down to a "new life of peace, contentment and usefulness". One such couple from Moore River were allowed to take a holiday in Perth and although "subjected to all sorts of temptations" they had not succumbed and they were "delighted when the time came for them to return to the settlement".  

Neville's reports reflected his own interests in promoting a positive image of the settlements for official consumption. He had played the major role in planning and supervising the establishment of the settlements and his reputation as an administrator rested on their success. As has been indicated, available evidence provides

* The men referred to as murderers by Neville included a man convicted of tribal murder and another who killed a white man who sexually interfered with his wife (AR/192C).
a dramatically different view of the settlements. They were drab institutions run on a shoestring budget with Aborigines living in conditions which would have been considered intolerable for whites. Through their labour the Aborigines played a vital role in developing and working the settlements, but the majority had been forced to live there and most resented the institutional way of life. The children, in particular, rebelled openly against their situation through their repeated attempts to escape and their unruly behaviour. However the Aborigines had little opportunity to present their views to the public and Neville's image of the settlements remained the officially accepted view, despite a dramatic deterioration in conditions during the 1920s. The settlement scheme continued as the cornerstone of Aboriginal policy in the south.

**Conclusion**

The events in the wheat belt towns between 1911 and 1914 had profound repercussions on Aborigines throughout the south of the state. Through their actions the white residents of these towns forced the government to adopt a policy of social isolation of Aborigines on farming settlements in the south and to play a more active role generally in relation to Aborigines in the area. The appointment of Neville as Chief Protector marked a turning point in the administration of the Aborigines Department and his personal interest in the state's part-Aboriginal population and his staunch support for the settlement scheme profoundly influenced government policy and practice in relation to Aborigines in the south. From this time they were brought directly under the control of the Department while at the same time they were excluded from the political, economic and social structures of the wider community. In this way
they were to be prevented from influencing the terms of their own participation in the wider community, and their affairs and interests were strictly controlled to ensure that they did not conflict with those of the dominant white community. This took its most extreme form in the incarceration of Aborigines in the settlements which caused the breaking up of Aboriginal families and their dislocation from their home districts, solely to serve the interests of the white residents of the south.
FOOTNOTES – Chapter Five

3. Ibid.
4. AF/753/1914.
6. AF/753/1914.
7. Ibid.
8. W.A. 12/10/1913.
9. AF/269/1915.
11. Ibid.
12. AF/753/1914.
13. Ibid.
16. CS/2795/1922.
17. E/3217/1912.
19. AF/2045/1916.
21. AF/544/1914.
22. E/4259/1914.
23. Ibid.
24. AF/356/1915.
25. AF/806/1911.
26. AF/836/1911.
27. AF/950/1913.
28. AF/1230/1913.
29. AF/1782/1914.
30. AF/1030/1915.
32. CS/213/1921.
33. AF/1664/1911.
35. AF/753/1914.
37. AF/753/1914.
38. Ibid; AF/725/1915.
39. NW/337/1927.
40. AF/753/1914.
42. PD, 45, 1912: 3804-5.
43. PD, 30, 1906: 2677-8.
44. PD, 35, 1909: 1848.
45. PD, 45, 1912: 3805.
46. PD, 30, 1906: 2677.
47. AR/1920.
49. Ibid: 1643.
50. Ibid: 1643.
51. Ibid: 1644.
52. Ibid: 1644.
53. Ibid: 1641.
54. Ibid: 1641.
55. AF/1911: 5.
57. PD, 21, 1915: 375.
63. Ibid.
64. Neville, 1944: 80-81.
66. Philomena Willoway, private communication.
67. AR/1916.
68. GG 24/12/1914: 4660; AR/1919.
69. AR/1919.
70. AR/1917: 3.
71. AR/1917, 1918.
72. AR/1920.
73. AR/1916.
74. GG 12/5/1916: 888.
75. AR/1917.
76. A/303/1931.
77. AR/1916.
78. AR/1919.
79. AR/2173/1919.
80. AR/1919.
81. AF/2173/1919.
82. AR/308/1916.
83. AF/2292/1917.
84. AF/691/1918.
85. AF/91/1919.
86. AF/651/1917.
87. AF/1289/1917; 2433/1917.
88. CS/2607/1923.
89. AF/725/1915.
91. AR/1915.
92. AR/1916, 1917.
93. AF/725/1915.
95. Crowther, 1981.
96. WA 16/9/1920.
98. Ibid.
99. AF/1795/1917.
100. A/295/1928.
102. E/4259/1914.
103. AR/1917.
104. CS/1422/1921.
105. AF/47/1916.
106. AF/1081/1915.
107. GC 7/3/1919.
108. AF/725/1915.
109. AF/519/1915.
110. A/18/1927.
111. AF/817/1918.
112. A/20/1929.
113. AF/1323/1917.
114. AR/1920.
115. CS/261/1921.
118. AR/1918.
120. AR/1919.
121. AR/1920.
122. AR/1918–1920.
123. AR/1917.
124. AR/1918.
125. CS/261/1921.
126. Ibid.
127. CS/571/1921.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid.
130. Ibid.
131. Ibid.
132. AR/1919: 11.
133. AR/1920.
134. AR/1920.
135. Ibid.
CHAPTER SIX

Introduction

The early 1920s brought further changes for Aborigines living in the south. An ambitious programme of agricultural development initiated by the state government brought relief from the economic recession of the post-war years and created a renewed demand for Aboriginal workers. However, they remained confined to the narrow niche of contract and seasonal employment and their chances of finding even this type of work gradually diminished as the decade wore on. Meanwhile, further clearing of the land forced increasing numbers of Aborigines to camp near towns or in centralised sites in the farming districts. At the same time, changes in the structure of the Department led to a deterioration in the administration of Aboriginal affairs in the south which became overwhelmingly concerned with matters of economy and administrative expediency. These concerns led to a shift away from the real aims contained in Neville's native settlement scheme. Carrolup settlement was closed in 1922 and Aborigines capable of earning a living outside the settlements were instructed to do so while the others were moved to Moore River settlement. From this time conditions at Moore River deteriorated rapidly. It became a rigid "total institution" providing for the permanent incarceration of people unwanted in the wider community and, while it retained its role in preparing children for employment outside the settlements, its evolving rigid bureaucratically controlled structure served instead to create the foundations of an enduring institutionalised community. Meanwhile, in response to growing white opposition to the increasing numbers of Aborigines in the towns, the Department arranged for the gazetting of a number
of small town reserves as camping grounds for Aborigines. From this time Moore River settlement and the town reserves shaped the patterns of life of most Aborigines in the south. These changes grew from the Department's concern with economy and expediency and its response to the increased availability of employment for Aborigines in the south rather than from any change in policy. However, the Department's ability to virtually dictate policies to suit its own needs remained characteristic of the administration of Aboriginal affairs in the south, reflecting official and public indifference and the Aborigines' powerlessness to influence the way they interacted with the wider community.

Aborigines and Agricultural Development in the 1920s

During the 1920s the Western Australian government embarked on a further major programme of agricultural development in the south intended to relieve the economic recession of the post-war years and to provide employment for the state's returned soldiers. This programme was based on the stimulation and extension of wheat farming in the south and the development of a dairy industry in the heavily forested areas of the southwest corner of the state.¹ Developments in the wheat belt brought a temporary increase in the demand for Aborigines as contract and seasonal workers but they failed to generate new employment opportunities for Aborigines and the revival of immigration brought strong competition for the limited rural work available. The development of the dairying industry was designed around the establishment of groups of predominantly British settlers on the land who were to collectively clear the land and prepare it for cultivation.² This created no additional employment for Aborigines and the requirement that British immigrants take up rural
work for a period of twelve months prior to joining the group settlers brought further competition for rural employment. At the same time the clearing of the forests played a part in forcing the few Aborigines still living there into town camps.

Wheat was an economically attractive crop in the early 1920s. Its price on the world market was rising and developments in strains of wheat and techniques of cultivation made the settlement of areas previously considered unsuitable for wheat production a viable economic proposition. Building on the existing land grant and agricultural credit systems and the policy of providing cheap rail transport to meet the needs of expanding settlement, the state government developed a dual policy of consolidation of the existing wheat belt areas and expansion into marginal areas. Again the emphasis was on placing families with limited capital on small blocks for intensive cultivation. As early as 1917 the government began to buy up alienated land for sub-division into farms for returned soldiers as part of its Soldier Settlement Scheme. Some sixty estates were purchased between 1917 and 1930 along with smaller farms put on the market during the war years. Much of the land was in wheat growing areas although estates in the Swan River valley were also purchased for subdivision into small blocks for mixed farming. Some large estates were also sold on the private market. Kendenup, an estate of 47,235 acres formerly run as a sheep station by the Hassell family, was purchased privately in 1920 for development into a "model settlement" with a centralised town site surrounded by farming blocks of ten to sixty acres. The government also took steps to ensure that all Crown land was being used to best effect and a number of government reserves were resumed and thrown open for selection. At the same time the government opened up five million
acres of "light" land in marginal areas to the north, east and south of the existing wheat belt for wheat farming.  

Attracted by the high prices for wheat and the opportunity of economic independence, potential farmers responded eagerly to the government's initiatives and there was a rush for land. In response, the Lands Department developed a system of grading applicants in granting blocks: returned soldiers had first priority, then came British ex-servicemen, munition workers and ordinary settlers. Influenced by the difficult experiences of earlier Aboriginal farmers, few Aborigines applied for land. Those who did were at a distinct disadvantage. Few had been permitted to enlist in the armed forces during the war and there was only one known case of a part-Aboriginal returned soldier, Frederick Smith, being granted a block of land under the Soldier Settlement Scheme. At the same time official and community attitudes to placing Aborigines on the land had hardened. Neville wrote in 1918 that it was "useless" granting farms to Aborigines as they made few improvements to the land and they simply wanted land "in order that they may feel they possess it". In the same year he wrote: "Personally I have no faith in a native ever making a success of farming, as every allotment I have seen taken up by a native or half-caste has either been abandoned or simply used as a camping ground". An application from an Aboriginal for land in the Mount Barker district was opposed by local farmers on the grounds that the land would become "a niggers camp with the usual collection of natives and dogs" and that having an Aboriginal for "a neighbour [would] make it unpleasant for [the] womenfolk". They demanded that the applicant be granted a block "on some land that [was] not settled by whites". As a consequence only three reserve
blocks totalling some five hundred acres were granted to Aboriginal farmers between 1915 and 1936.*

Meanwhile, the economic recession had proved a severe handicap for the few Aborigines still on the land and, due to the lack of alternative camping sites, some blocks were used as family camps rather than farms. During the 1920s the holders of these blocks faced the more stringent attitude of the Lands Department which insisted on the resumption of all blocks which were not being fully utilised. Geordie Tillinup had a homestead block in the Kojonup district which was fenced and partially cleared and which was used as an occasional camp by Aborigines from the area. When he died in 1924 his wife was given six months by the Lands Department to complete the required improvements to the block and when she was unable to raise the necessary finance to do so the block was resumed.12 By the 1930s the Aborigines’ earlier efforts to farm the land had been virtually forgotten by all but their families and in 1931 Neville stated confidently that he knew of only one example of an Aboriginal who had successfully worked the land in Western Australia.13

Meanwhile the white settlers were establishing themselves on the land. During the 1920s a further thirteen million acres of land was alienated in the state and the number of individual holdings increased by five thousand. The total area under crop grew from 1.6 million to 4.8 million acres between 1920 and 1930 and wheat production increased accordingly, reaching a record of 53.5 million bushels in 1931.14 Many established settlers in the wheat belt were able to consolidate their position and to extend and diversify their farming operations. Attracted by rising prices for wool, many

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* For further details on these farming reserves see Appendix II.
ventured into sheep farming and between 1920 and 1930 wool production in the state increased from £39.1 million to £71.5 million. Mechanised power farming made its appearance in the late 1920s and this encouraged many farmers to invest in farm machinery and to extend their land holdings. At the same time continuing high levels of natural increase and the arrival of British and southern European immigrants (the latter were allowed in under quotas set by the Federal government) boosted the state's population from 335,558 in 1920 to 431,610 in 1930.

These developments led to an increased demand for Aboriginal workers in contract clearing and seasonal farm work in the wheat and sheep industries. Those Aborigines who had not been removed to the settlements continued to follow the patterns outlined earlier of working in family groups for farmers in their "runs". At the same time there was a drift of workers away from the settlements, in particular Carrolup, as men found work in the surrounding districts either through their own or the Department's efforts. Continued union opposition meant that most Aborigines were obliged to work outside the unions and they were thereby denied the protection offered by union membership. Instead they made their own arrangements with employers and while the demand for their services remained high they could insist on fair wages and conditions from their employers. However the Aborigines' ability to find work was affected by several factors during the early 1920s. In 1922 the Department informed all police and protectors in the south that Aborigines in casual seasonal work were to be employed under the provisions of the 1905 Aborigines Act. This led to complaints from several employers who objected to the cost and bother of having to take out permits when they paid Aborigines equal wages to white workers. Some threatened
Family Group, Kellerberrin, 1920s
not to employ Aborigines and police in several districts drew
attention to the fact that Aboriginal workers stood to suffer under
such an arrangement. The Inspector of Police in Bunbury told the
Commissioner of Police in 1922 that it was the "poor natives" who
would "suffer most" and that while the non-enforcement of the permit
system would mean a loss of "a few shillings a year" to the Department
its enforcement would create obstacles to Aborigines seeking employ-
ment and thereby a "greater loss...to the department and a hardship
to the natives".\textsuperscript{18}

At the same time Aborigines in established areas of the wheat
belt were finding that there was now little contract clearing work
available and this seriously affected their ability to earn a
livelihood. Four Aborigines from the Gnowangerup district, Wilfred
Morrison, Fred Winmar, Robert Starlight and Moses, wrote to the
Department that they had "worked Gnowangerup or helped to the farming
country" but now that the district was "in good going order" the
farmers did not "want to see us blacks about but a few years ago
was very glad of us".\textsuperscript{19} At the same time British and southern
European immigrants were competing with Aborigines for the available
rural work. The southern European immigrants were regarded by the
unions and the Labor Party with almost the same contempt as Aboriginal
workers. While the Labor Party was prepared to accept sustained
British migration with only isolated objections to its effect on
rural employment, it expressed open hostility and "unashamed
prejudice" towards the southern Europeans. Party minutes of the
period refer to the "menace of foreign labour" and the resulting
privations for "decent Britishers". The immigrants were accused
of shoddy workmanship and "unsanitary habits and practices".\textsuperscript{20}

Certainly, competition for employment was strongest between Aborigines
and southern Europeans, not only in the wheat belt but also in casual work such as potato digging on farms along the southern coastal strip. This aroused considerable Aboriginal resentment towards the southern European workers. Mr Lee-Steere of Walebing stated in a letter to the Department in 1928 that

the future of the half-castes in this State [was] not bright as the Southern European [was] going to cut them out of nearly all the work they have been used to doing, in this district at any rate...[When] the burning off stops I don't quite know what the above class of native is going to do. They travel as far as Carnamah but they say the Southern European is doing all the work. "Foreigner" as these fellows call them.

The government's policy of consolidation of the wheat belt, together with expansion into marginal wheat growing areas and the forested areas of the south and its programme of maximum utilisation of all arable land in the south served to further reduce the Aborigines' choices of camping places. As will be discussed later, the Aborigines' situation was further exacerbated by the closure of Carrolup settlement in 1922. Most wheat belt towns reported an increase in the number of Aborigines camping in their vicinity during the early 1920s. The Williams police reported in 1922 that there were seventy Aborigines camping on a regular basis in the town and in 1924 they informed the Department that 124 Aborigines had gathered in town to attend the Annual Sports Day. Some families used blocks of reserve land outside the towns as their base. Aborigines in the Williams district also camped on a reserve near the small township of Geeralging while families in the Kellerberrin district camped at a site known as Djurian on land owned by the Leake family of Mooranoppin several kilometres out of town. Djurian was a traditional
camping ground for Aborigines with an adjacent complex of caves which were of ritual significance. The Mundaring pipeline which carried water from Perth to the goldfields ran near to the camp, providing the Aborigines with water, and they found employment with local farmers.\textsuperscript{23} The few Aborigines still earning a living from possum hunting in the forest areas of the south were gradually forced out of the bush by the increased clearing of the land. Some moved across to Busselton; others like Lilly Hayward, who grew up in the forest area to the southwest of Kojonup, moved across to live with relatives camped at Gnowangerup.\textsuperscript{*}

Aborigines in the Perth area were affected by the resumption of estates in outlying suburbs. In 1921 the Repatriation Department took over the Pyron Estate, a heavily timbered area of seven hundred acres near Guildford, for conversion into farms for returned soldiers. Aborigines were in the habit of using this land as a base during the grape and fruit picking seasons and people from the nearby Beechboro and Lockridge camps gathered there regularly on weekends. The settlement of the land by returned soldiers brought them into conflict with Aborigines and, following complaints that the latter were camping too close to the settlers' houses and that they were destroying crops and their dogs were killing poultry, the Aborigines were forced off the land, apparently by the police.\textsuperscript{24}

Residents of wheat belt towns took exception to the increasing Aboriginal presence in the towns. They accused the Aborigines of being noisy, unsightly, a menace to health, associating with undesirable whites and drinking and fighting amongst themselves. Their complaints were often unfounded. In 1924 the Kellerberrin

\textsuperscript{*} See Appendix I, Interview Five.
Road Board and the local Medical Officer informed the Commissioner of Health that Aborigines were using the camp reserved for farmers visiting town and making it "unhealthy". The police, however, reported that the camp was clean and was only used on a temporary basis by women waiting to give birth under the supervision of the local doctor and as an overnight camp by Aborigines on their way to Djurian. The Gnowangerup residents had a more legitimate grievance as Aborigines were camping near the two government dams in the town water catchment area and the absence of sanitation did represent a threat to health.

While local farmers remained dependent on Aboriginal labour the townspeople were not prepared to demand the total removal of Aborigines from the towns. Instead they demanded that the Aborigines be forced to camp together at one local site set aside specifically for this purpose. The police supported their demands as centralised camping sites would greatly facilitate their task of controlling Aborigines living near the towns. As will be discussed later, the Department complied with the townspeople's demands and a number of small camping reserves were established in the southern towns. These became an integral part of the Aborigines' way of life in the south, being used as a base by those going out to employment on farms in the surrounding district and as a home during periods of unemployment. At the same time the Aborigines were used as a labour pool by local employers.

**Changes in the Aborigines Department: 1920-1926**

In December 1920 the administration of Aboriginal Affairs in Western Australia was divided along geographical lines. Aboriginal affairs north of the 25th parallel were placed under the umbrella
of the Department of the North West, created in 1920 to coordinate all government activities in the north and to promote the development of the area through the encouragement of closer settlement, tropical agriculture and the expansion of the pastoral industry. Neville was appointed jointly as Secretary of the Department of the North West and Chief Protector of Aborigines with responsibility for Aboriginal affairs in the north. Aboriginal affairs in the south were to come under the control of the Department of Aborigines and Fisheries, and the Chief Inspector of Fisheries was appointed jointly as Deputy Chief Protector of Aborigines with responsibility for the south. This arrangement continued until 1926 when the Department of the North West was abolished and Aboriginal affairs throughout the state were placed once again under the control of the Aborigines Department, with Neville as Chief Protector.  

In theory this administrative division could have led to the development of effective regional policies suited to the needs of Aborigines in the north and south of the state. In practice the arrangement proved most unfortunate for the south, which suffered from poor administration and insufficient funding as a result of the split. The Deputy Chief Protector, Fred Aldrich, had no experience in the administration of Aboriginal affairs and no knowledge or interest in Aboriginal matters. He replaced Gale as Chief Inspector of Fisheries in 1911, after building up a reputation in his home state of New South Wales as an expert on marine and freshwater fish, oyster cultivation and the construction and use of equipment in the fishing industry.  

* An obituary following his death in 1965 recorded that as Chief Inspector of Fisheries in Western Australia, Aldrich recognised the rich commercial and sporting potential of the coastal waters of the state and he was also remembered as a former President of the Badminton Association of Western Australia (WA 23/9/1965). His term as Chief Protector of Aborigines was not mentioned.
Aldrich's involvement in the administration of the Department has been virtually forgotten. Biskup (1973) and Bolton (1981) make no mention of him in their accounts of the administration of Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia. This reflects Aldrich's own priorities. Aborigines were of secondary importance to his other area of responsibility, fisheries, and he left much of the work to the Secretary of the Aborigines Department, Ernest E. Copping, who made tours of inspection to the settlements and towns in the south and dealt with Aborigines seeking assistance from the Department.

While Neville himself had no previous experience with Aborigines when he became Chief Protector in 1915, he did have Underwood as his mentor and guide. Aldrich was left virtually on his own. Between 1920 and 1926 the portfolio of Aboriginal Affairs was assigned to the Colonial Secretary and the incumbents of this office, both in the Mitchell National Country Party and the Collier Labor ministries, showed little interest in Aboriginal issues in the south. Nor was there much consultation between Neville and Aldrich. When they did communicate, their views usually differed strongly and Aldrich showed little inclination to defer to Neville's greater expertise. Aldrich was also required to administer the Department on a very limited budget. Between 1920 and 1926 the Department received only one-sixth of the total state annual grant for Aborigines, that is, between £5,000 and £6,500 per annum. The rest went to the north.

* Copping had managed the Department during Neville's long service leave from December 1919 to June 1920.

** Frank Broun (MLA, Beverley) was Colonial Secretary and Minister for Public Health from 1919 to 1922 in the Mitchell Ministry. Following his resignation in 1922 R.S. Sampson (MLA, Swan) was appointed to these portfolios. John Drew was appointed Colonial Secretary in the Collier Ministry in 1924 (Bolton, 1961).
This low level of funding, combined with Aldrich's lack of interest and expertise in Aboriginal affairs, led to a continued concentration on economy and administrative expediency at the expense of the needs of Aborigines in the south. Development of the settlements ground to a halt and there was an overall deterioration in living standards. In 1922, in response to the increased demand for Aboriginal workers and pressure for land in the south and in an effort to further reduce Departmental expenditure by reducing the settlement populations, Aldrich recommended the closure of Carrolup. Low funding and inadequate Departmental supervision also led to a further deterioration in conditions at Moore River following the closure of Carrolup in 1922, while beyond the settlements the Department was obliged to provide camping reserves for Aborigines who could no longer use Carrolup as a camping base or who were pushed out of their camps in the bush by the further clearing of the land. Meanwhile, the implementation of the 1905 Aborigines Act at the local level was left very much to the whim of the police and other protectors. One exception was employment and, as has been indicated, Aldrich insisted on the rigid implementation of the permit system. His motive in doing so was to generate revenue for the Department through the obligatory payment of fees for permits and to "protect the interests" of the Aborigines. Despite complaints from employers and protectors about the enforcement of these provisions in relation to casual employment, Aldrich maintained that if they were "enforced in one instance, and not in another, then the employers would have cause to complain". Aldrich showed an equally inflexible attitude to the granting of exemptions. In 1921 he wrote:
I will not grant any permits to half-caste natives. I have had a deal of experience in this regard. If a permit is granted to a half-caste the other Aborigines use him as a channel for the supply of liquor because if he refuses they look upon him as an enemy in the camp.

There was no doubt some truth in this comment, nevertheless it shows that Aldrich was prepared to brand all Aborigines as the same and to refuse individuals their rights on the basis of his own pre-conceived notions.

The combination of Aldrich's unfortunate administrative decisions and his indifference to the situation of Aborigines in the south, together with insufficient funding, led to the adoption of "stop-gap" solutions to the problems of Aborigines in the south during the early 1920s. When Aldrich handed back responsibility for Aboriginal affairs to Neville in 1926 he left a legacy of problems which angered and dismayed Neville.

Economization in the Settlements

Work on the development of the settlements ground to a halt under Aldrich's administration and standards of services provided there dropped rapidly as staff were required to economise in all areas. This was particularly noticeable in education, nutrition and health. In 1921 Aldrich informed the two settlement teachers that they would no longer be employed under Education Department conditions but instead would be required to work under the same conditions as the children's attendants at the settlements and to carry out any duties as directed by the Superintendent. This meant a significant drop in salary (from £112 to £75 per annum), drastically reduced leave and long working hours which left little time to prepare lessons. At the same time Aldrich ordered the teachers to remove
all "superfluous" equipment such as toys and plasticine from the classroom and to follow strictly vocational teaching programmes. From this time the children received instruction only in reading, writing and basic monetary values to Third Standard while the girls were given additional "training" in domestic work, sewing, knitting and crocheting. Due to the lack of facilities and staff at the settlement and the expectation that inmates were to contribute to their keep, this "training" took the form of chores: working in the sewing room, cleaning out the compound buildings and staff quarters and working on the settlement farm. As soon as possible the children and young people were sent out to work in the wider community.

Levels of nutrition also fell as expenditure on agricultural development was curtailed at both settlements. The sheep raising venture at Moore River failed in 1921 and from that time the men hunted for kangaroos and rabbits to meet the settlement's meat requirements. The diet of children at Carrolup was described as "Dickensian" by Superintendent Mitchell, who was transferred in that year from Moore River to Carrolup following the resignation of Superintendent Blake. Although he recommended immediate improvement in the children's diet, no action was taken and in the same year Mitchell and his staff were chastised by Aldrich for "indulging" in spicco and jellico for a wedding party put on by the staff for one of the settlement's most conscientious Aboriginal workers, Mena Wells.

Poor diet and unhealthy living conditions left the settlement residents susceptible to the ravages of disease and little effort was made by the Department to provide the people with adequate medical attention as had been done under Neville. Doctors were called in
only in extreme emergencies and even then the quality of the service they provided often left much to be desired. Dentists never visited the settlement. Irene Farrell, a former resident of the settlement, recalls:

You had to be just about dead before they'd get the doctor in to see you. One doctor they used to get was as silly as a rabbit. He'd cough all over you when you went to see him and then he'd give you a prescription. It was nearly always for barley water. A lot of people died at Moore River and I don't think anyone knew what they died from. They'd just wrap them up and put them in a coffin and bury them at the cemetery there. We'd never see a dentist. If you had to have a tooth out the Superintendent would do it. He'd pack some cloves around your tooth and yank it out.

In 1921 an alarming number of Aborigines at both settlements were reported to have contracted tuberculosis. In the same year fifty-six Carrolup residents came down with measles and there were a number of deaths due to associated complications such as pneumonia. Later in the year there was an epidemic of influenza and in January 1922 whooping cough spread through the settlement. Scabies was reported amongst residents at Moore River in 1921 and in the same year 106 residents came down with influenza, causing three deaths.* During the winter months of 1922 two-thirds of the residents were reported to be suffering from chronic bronchitis. 37 Strict economy was also observed in burials at the settlement. Irene Farrell recalls that corpses were wrapped in a blanket or sheet of canvas and placed on a board in a small tin hut until arrangements had been made for their burial. They were then placed in a coffin made of pine wood or packing cases and after a brief service buried at the small cemetery on the settlement reserve. 38

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* Ngilgie, Daisy Bates's informant at Welshpool Reserve, was amongst those who died.
In addition to these economies, Aldrich sought to reduce expenditure on the settlements by ensuring that all those residents who could support themselves in the wider community were sent out to work under Departmental superviser. From 1921 the Superintendents were required to forward names of all Aboriginal adults and children over the age of fourteen whose services were not required at the settlements to the Department so that they could be sent out to work. Meanwhile, adults who could not support themselves were detained permanently at the settlements where they could be kept more economically than on the outside. In some instances, adults whose families were willing to look after them were detained at the settlement, and this apparent contradiction with Aldrich's aims of reducing numbers at the settlements was probably prompted by the belief that the families would not continue to support them and they would eventually end up on the town ration lists. In addition, such attempts at independence were viewed by the Department as standing up to its authority and "cheekiness". The Department's attitude caused considerable anxiety for elderly Aborigines. In 1921 Billy Hill (Newland) was sent to Moore River to recuperate from a broken leg. Two years later he escaped from the settlement and rejoined his stepson, Billy Calvin of Dewer Pool, who informed the Department that he would look after the old man. However, Aldrich insisted that he was to be returned to Moore River under Ministerial warrant. Hill refused to go and he spent the remaining two years of his life eluding the police. In 1921 two elderly women, Fanny Shaw and Clara Nettup, were allowed to spend Christmas with their families at Moora. They subsequently refused to return to Moore River, stating that they were being cared for by their families. Mrs Nettup added that she would rather be killed than return to the settlement because
of the treatment she had received there. However, Ministerial warrants were issued for both women and they were forced to return.  

The production of garments was accelerated to offset expenditure on the settlements. A sewing room was established at Moore River in 1921 and in the following year young women from both settlements were producing nappies for King Edward Hospital, night shirts and underpants for the Old Men's Home at Claremont, and trousers, coats and vests for the Lunacy Department as well as clothing for the Aborigines Department, and table and bed linen for staff employed at the settlements.  

At Carrolup, girls from the age of thirteen worked in the sewing room for up to thirty hours a week without pay. Despite the industrial nature of production and the hours worked by the women, the Department objected strongly to a suggestion in 1922 that the sewing rooms be placed under the Factories and Shops Act, claiming that the girls and young women were simply being trained to earn a living outside the settlements.  

As has been indicated, Aldrich's economy measures at the settlements culminated in the closure of Carrolup in 1922. Early in that year the Department prepared a report for the Minister recommending the closure on the grounds that it would represent a considerable saving in Departmental expenditure and allow the limited available funding to be concentrated on developing facilities at one settlement rather than being spread ineffectively over two. There was no need for two settlements in the south as the older generation of Aborigines was dying out and the younger people could find employment outside the settlements. Moore River was considered a more suitable site for a settlement than Carrolup as its drier climate was more suited to the accommodation of Aborigines from various parts of the state. The Department advised the Minister that Aborigines at Carrolup would
have no objections to the move and that there was no danger in keeping Aborigines from different districts together in one settlement.  

The unofficial reasons behind the proposal were the increased pressure for land in the south and objections to the settlement from local white residents. In a subsequent letter to the Lands Department the Aborigines Department stated that Carrolup reserve could be useful in meeting the demand for farming land and that it was "probably worth several thousands of pounds". In 1922 the Lands Department valued the ten thousand acre reserve and the improvements made to the land (these included 300 acres of clearing, 150 of which were under crop, extensive fencing, and a number of sturdy stone and timber buildings) at £5,000. Aldrich's proposals contrasted markedly with those of Neville who had taken strong action in 1919 to prevent the Lands Department from resuming the Moola Bulla reserve in the north.* There had also been several complaints from local white organisations about Carrolup and it is likely that these influenced the Department in its recommendations. As has been discussed, the Woodinalling Roads Board had demanded the closure of the Carrolup settlement during the 1919 Spanish Influenza epidemic and in the following year the Kojonup Roads Board complained to the Department of Works and Trading Concerns about the large number of dogs at the settlement which were alleged to be worrying stock; the matter was

* In 1918, without prior consultation with Neville, the Lands Department excised 200,000 acres from the Wyndham end of the Marndoc reserve in the West Kimberley and in the following year the Repatriation Department announced plans to use Moola Bulla as a training centre for returned soldiers who were to be granted blocks of land on the completion of their training. Neville managed to prevent this by having Moola Bulla gazetted under the provisions of the 1905 Aborigines Act. However, he failed to stop the Lands Department from throwing open a further 880,000 acres of marginal land on the southern boundary of the Marndoc reserve for selection by ex-servicemen (Biskup, 1973).
also raised at the Annual State Conference of Roads Boards. The Acting Under Secretary of the Works Department subsequently advised the Aborigines Department that action should be taken to deal with the matter as Kojonup was a prosperous sheep farming district and the interests of local farmers should be "looked after". A report from Superintendent Mitchell showed that the allegations were unfounded. He stated that he had received no reports of dogs worrying sheep on neighbouring properties or on the settlement and that all dogs were accompanied by their owners when out hunting or kept tethered at the camp. In 1922 representatives of the 5th Military District of the Commonwealth Military Forces and the Katanning Branch of the Returned Soldiers League complained to the Aborigines Department about men from Carrolup wearing military uniforms on their visits to town to collect stores. The Department pointed out in reply that some part-Aborigines had fought at the Front during the war and were therefore entitled to wear their uniforms. In addition, the Ministry of Defence had made a quantity of discarded military clothing available to the Department at a modest cost and, after being dyed and repaired, these items of clothing had been issued to Aborigines at Carrolup.

The proposal to close Carrolup was approved in Cabinet in June 1922, when Neville was overseas. Certainly he was not consulted on the matter. He later wrote that it was

...lamentable that such action should have been permitted....As Chief Protector and founder of the settlements in consequence of a defined policy to extend over a number of years, I have never been consulted in any shape or form.
Superintendent Mitchell's opinion was not sought either, despite his extensive involvement with Moore River and Carrolup. In a letter to Neville in 1924 he described the action as

...a stupid piece of cruelty...the misguided action of amateurs, in the name of economy. The natives have no unions and merely depend for a decent and fair deal to the humanitarian sentiments of their guardian...with your predecessor in office the inevitable happened...worse still the cruelty was inflicted and no economy was achieved.

However, the response from local white farmers and organisations was favourable. The Kojonup Roads Board publicly supported the decision and farmers adjacent to the Carrolup reserve wrote to the Department expressing their thanks. In July 1922 the Kojonup and Katanning Roads Boards suggested that Carrolup be converted to a training institution for British migrants where they could learn to become agricultural labourers while at the same time clearing the land of timber and large patches of noxious weeds. Residents of Katanning and the Primary Producers' Association however, expressed concern that Aborigines remaining in the district would move back into Katanning and that the events of 1914 would be repeated. They were assured by the Department that a camping ground would be provided for the Aborigines some distance from town and the police were instructed to prevent them from staying in the vicinity of the town.

Surprisingly, the Lands Department showed little interest in resuming the reserve. Initially the land was leased to a local farmer at £75 per annum (this was to be paid into the Aborigines Department Trust Fund Account) in the event that the Aborigines Department should

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50 Mitchell and his wife and daughter (who held the positions of Matron and teacher at Carrolup) left the Department after the closure of the settlement and returned to their farm at Benjaberring near Northam. Mitchell was subsequently appointed as local protector of Aborigines and in 1925 he was appointed as Inspector of Aborigines by Neville. He held this position until 1931 when the position was abolished due to lack of funding.
need to resume the land. It was not until 1924 that the reserve was cancelled and the land surveyed and subdivided into four blocks which were subsequently thrown open for selection. The two acre cemetery was retained as an Aboriginal reserve. In 1926 a local protector reported that the settlement buildings were being used for farming purposes: the bakehouse had been converted to a piggery and the stone school hall was used to house poultry. Other buildings were used as barns and for storing machinery.

News of the impending move spread amongst residents and visitors to Carrolup during a double wedding at the settlement on the 16th of June. The Aborigines were justifiably upset. After being forced out of the town camps and into the settlement they were now to be moved to Moore River or left to find camping places in an area cleared and settled by a white community hostile to their presence. In addition, the settlement had been built up through their labour and now it was to be closed without compensation for their work or consideration of their wishes. The Aborigines were also dismayed at the disruption of family life which would follow the removal of sick and elderly adults and children to Moore River. Given the cost of travel to Moore River and the Department's opposition to visits to the settlement, there was little likelihood that adults remaining behind would ever see their relatives and even their children again. The families remaining in the district would have no recognised camping base to use between jobs and no school for their children and they would face the continual threat of having their children taken from them and sent to Moore River. Old and sick people would no longer be cared for in their home district but instead would be sent to a place far from their families, friends and birthplaces. Carrolup residents of all ages resented the prospect of leaving their
own country for the unfamiliar surroundings of Moore River and were fearful of having to live with Aborigines who were strangers to them and their ways. For those residents who had been moved to Carrolup from the children's missions in Perth or from districts outside of the Great Southern, the move meant a further massive dislocation of their lives.

The children in the compound were particularly upset. The girls told the staff that they did not want to go to Moore River: it was too far away from their families and the climate would be too hot for them. Although a strong guard was mounted on the compound to prevent escapes, twenty-four girls managed to break out in a desperate effort to rejoin their families. However they were rounded up and returned to Carrolup. To allay their fears and to prevent further break-outs, the staff spread the rumour that the move was to be only temporary while repairs were made to the settlement buildings.54

The move was planned for the end of June and in all 104 persons, including elderly and sick residents, children and a number of "useful" workers, were to be transported to Moore River. In the interim, forty-three Ministerial warrants were issued to cover adults not already detained under these conditions. At 6 p.m. on the 28th of June the Aborigines, carrying small bundles of their belongings and some bedding, were put into two special carriages at the Katanning Railway Station to await the arrival of the midnight train to Perth.

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54 Warrants were issued for the following people: Albert Dinah, Henry Dinah, George Dinah, Polly Larrikan, Mabel Leyland, Edith Green, Ethel Green, Dick Cundian, Ivy Cundian, George Ring, Ellen Wood, Micky, Annie, Mary Jane Brown, Bluey, Mary Bluey, Muriel Martin, Queenie Harris, Ernest Regan, Nellie Limestone, Yorkshire Bob, George Coyle, James Brittain, Polly Miller, Christina Morrison, Mabel Morrison, Phillip Morrison, Ethel Dickie, Ray Tomba, Snowball, Tom Massey, Daisy Wheeler, Louie, Marie Allen, Arthur Bardy, Charlie Innal, Ivy Ross, Aleck Bilbarn, Willie Williams, Moses, Ellen Cuttibut, Pinchenda, Carrawatta (AD/393/1927).
Close supervision was maintained to ensure that there were no escapes. Just before midnight a man who had been working on a farm out of town and who had just heard of the move rushed onto the station platform, only to see the faces of his wife and children as the train pulled out. Once the train was under way, a special guard was mounted on the carriages. There was only one escape. George Jerong Dinah managed to squeeze through the window in the W.C. while the train was standing at Wagin station. Charlie Sandstone, a young man who had been sent down from Moore River to assist in the move, recalls that

they just let him go because he was King of the Sou'West. He was head man, head of the tribe. I remember the train was pulling out and somebody said, "Hello, there's old Dinah, he's going off". I never seen him again.

In 1927 Dinah was living at the Gnowangerup reserve and the local protector reported that he lived in continual fear of being sent away from his country.

The Aborigines arrived at Moogumber siding late the following night and were left to sleep overnight in their carriages. In the morning a horse and buggy arrived to transport the white staff accompanying them to Moore River and the Aborigines were left to walk the eight miles to the settlement. The experience of one Aboriginal who accompanied the group from Carrolup to Moore River was recorded in the following statement printed in the *Great Southern Herald* in July 1922:
Charlie Anthill is my name. I belong to this district from near Gnowangerup. Was at the Carrolup Settlement three to four months before broke up and shifted to Moore River. Went to see what it like. No good, no good at all. Tucker very little. No meat, little bread, little jam. Medicine stuff put in tea to make it sweet. Little wheat-meal porridge, little soup, very poor. Put men carrying wood for the settlement. Put all boys on. No cart, no horse, go into the bush, may two, three miles carry wood on back, one piece at time. No good. Put me on fencing. Posts long way way. Maybe mile. Carry 'em back to fence line. Boss no good. Sulky, sulky. Place no good to me. Saw boss hit boy maybe twelve years old on head and knock him down. Then kick him up. Boy frighten and go to clear out. Another boy chase him and fetch him back. Other natives tell me boy run away. Got right away but brought back. Boss put him in prison one day then tie him to a tree and have him flogged. Plenty sand at Moore River. All sand all around. No building like Carrolup. No sheep only few killers. Place no good. No crop 'cept little along river. No like Carrolup. Just cart firewood from bush. Tucker very very bad. Natives catch lizard and bardi and eat 'em to fill 'em up. No school for children, no nothing. No beds, no make 'em wash, no change clothes. Little girls from Carrolup never undress from time leave here till I come 'way. Go right back blackfellers. No good to me. I leave plenty quick.

Meanwhile, Aldrich congratulated himself on the apparent success of his economy drive. In his 1923 Annual Report he stated that only 261 Aborigines were being supported at Moore River compared to 310 at the two settlements in the previous year and expenditure on the settlements had dropped from £7,711 in 1922 to £5,440 in 1923. Over the next three years it was to drop further still. In the long run, however, Aldrich's economy measures proved counter-productive. Due

* The Department denied that Anthill was responsible for this statement on the grounds that he spoke much better English. Whether he was in fact responsible is of secondary importance as the description of conditions at Moore River was certainly based on an eye-witness account (CS/2193/1922).
to the lack of funding, the poor nature of the land at Moore River and insufficient Departmental supervision, agricultural production declined even further. Indeed, the settlement was further than ever from its goal of becoming self-supporting. In 1924 farm produce valued at £554 was grown at Moore River while the Department spent almost £3,000 on rations there.\(^1\) Living conditions also deteriorated markedly. The settlement buildings were originally planned to cater for two hundred residents but from 1923 the settlement had an average annual population of three hundred. Despite a few additions to the buildings in 1923,\(^*\) over-use and lack of maintenance and repairs led to a rapid deterioration in the settlement buildings and facilities and in 1925 they were reported to be dilapidated, verminous and in bad need of repair.\(^2\) The problem of supplying water to the increased number of residents was solved by pumping water directly from the river into overhead tanks in the compound while Aborigines in the camp were left to supply their needs directly from the river. Lack of funding and inadequate Departmental supervision combined to produce a rapid deterioration in conditions at Moore River during the early 1920s and it was during this period that it became associated with "shocking living conditions and the harshest of discriminatory controls".\(^3\) Meanwhile, Aborigines who had used Carrolup as a camping base between jobs and during holidays were obliged to move off and find alternative camps and, as has been indicated, this contributed to the movement of Aborigines into towns in the south during the early 1920s.

\(^*\) Additions were made to the girls' dormitories and the staff quarters and a new kitchen, dining room, sewing room, two-room hospital and work room were erected (AR/1923).
Institutional Life at the Settlement

During the early 1920s Moore River settlement evolved into a rigid mult-purpose "total institution" which was used by the Department as a "dumping ground" for Aborigines from various parts of the state. Originally planned as a small, self-supporting farming settlement, it came to combine the functions of

...creche, orphanage, relief depot, old men's home, old women's home, home for discharged prisoners, home for expatriated savages, home for unmarried mothers, home for incurables, lost dogs home and school for boys and girls. 64

Primarily, however, it was used as a place of isolation and detention for Aborigines ostracised by the white community or considered trouble makers by the police or the Department. Like inmates of other total institutions, Aborigines at Moore River lived physically isolated from the rest of the world and their communications with the wider community were strictly limited. Controlled by a small but powerful white staff they worked, played and slept within the confines of the settlement reserve and many were born and died there. As will be discussed, the few young people who were sent out to work in the wider community under the supervision of the Department were poorly trained and were accustomed to an institutionalised way of life. The prejudices of the white community often caused them to lead lonely and unhappy lives. Many returned to the settlement to establish their families, thereby creating an enduring institutionalised community at Moore River.

Life became increasingly unpleasant for everybody at the settlement during this period. The lot of the white staff was made difficult by the general lack of facilities, poor working conditions, the wide range of duties they were expected to carry out, and the

*This term is borrowed from Goffman (1961).
View of Moore River Native Settlement in the 1920s
showing the "Boob" and church hall/school building on right
Aborigines' resentment of their control and their institutionalised way of life. However, the staff could find compensation in their sense of higher status in relation to the Aboriginal residents, the special provisions for them in the form of housing and domestic help, their power to direct the lives of the Aborigines, and, particularly for those with a missionary background, their sense of fulfilling a special duty.

The conditions under which the settlement staff worked were most unsatisfactory. They were employed outside the provisions of the Public Service Act and therefore had no claim to benefits normally accorded to government employees; they had no security of tenure and could be dismissed without notice. They worked long hours for low wages. The children's attendants and teacher were paid an annual salary of £75 plus rations, and shared living quarters, for working eleven-hour shifts seven days a week, with only each alternate weekend off. This free time had to be spent at the settlement and their annual three week holiday could only be taken at a time approved by Head Office. The demands on the white staff and the lack of facilities meant that they were able to provide for the inmates at only the most basic levels and there was a marked emphasis on maintaining internal order and on keeping the inmates segregated from the outside world.

As in other closed institutions, the conduct of the staff was governed by strict formal rules. These served to further distinguish

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*Staff weekly rations consisted of: 3 pounds of flour, 2 pounds of sugar, 1/2 pound of tea, 2 ounces of jam, 1 pound of butter, 7 pounds of meat and any vegetable and farm produce as required. Kerosene was also provided as required (CS/387/1924). Other salaries in 1924 included: Superintendent £228; Matron £120; Sewing Mistress £110 (CS/387/1924: A/97/1929).
Staff at Moore River Native Settlement, 1928
Aboriginal "Police"

Moore River Native Settlement, 1920s
the small supervisory staff from the Aboriginal inmates and reinforced
the tendency typically found in closed institutions for staff and
inmates to adopt stereotyped and generally antagonistic attitudes
toward each other and to maintain social distance. Formal rules,
based on those drawn up for staff in psychiatric hospitals and prisons
in Western Australia, were first introduced by Aldrich in 1923 and
they strictly limited communication between staff and inmates and
also restricted their contact with the outside world. They were
to have no familiarity whatsoever with the inmates and were forbidden
to discuss their duties in front of their charges; they were to lodge
any complaints with the Superintendent who was to forward them to
the Deputy Chief Protector; they were forbidden to discuss the settle-
ment with outsiders and any person who did so faced instant dismissal.
In addition, staff were only to use the telephone in cases of absolute
emergency. They were also required to carry out all directives of
the Superintendent and to reside in the accommodation provided for
them and to wear at all times the uniforms provided by the
Department.

Given the conditions for staff it is hardly surprising that
the Department had difficulty attracting appropriately qualified
staff. With the exception of Superintendents Mitchell and Campbell
and their wives, few staff members during the 1920s were suited
to working at the settlement and even fewer had any relevant
qualifications. Male staff generally had previous experience in

* John 'Jack' Campell had lived in Derby and had fought and been
injured in World War I. His wife had joined up as a nurse during
the war. They took over at Moore River in 1921 after Mitchell
was transferred to Carrolup. Clara Jackimarra, who was living
in the compound during the early 1920s, recalled that he was "a
kindly superintendent" (Kelly, 1980: 75). Campbell was killed
in a motor accident in early 1923. His wife resigned as matron
and she was later appointed as Matron of the East Perth Girls Home,
which was opened by the Aborigines Department in 1931.
the armed forces, the police force or in farming, while female staff frequently came from a missionary background or had gained experience working in institutional settings such as psychiatric hospitals or migrant reception homes. Over the years a few qualified nursing staff were appointed. The Superintendent in charge of Moore River from 1924 to 1926 was a particularly unfortunate appointment. John T. Brodie was appointed on the basis of his service in the armed forces during the First World War, his knowledge of farming and his experience as a policeman in the north of Western Australia prior to the war. He was an inept administrator and was unable to manage his staff. He found the women staff members particularly hard to work with and he told Aldrich in 1924 that "it was almost impossible to get women to observe anything". In 1925 he laid charges of insulting and threatening behaviour against the Farm Assistant and accused him of neglecting his duties. He claimed that due to the Farm Assistant's negligence he had been forced to take over virtually all aspects of running the settlement, including the supervision of the general outside work (this included the care of stock, milking, butchering, kangaroo hunting, gardening, repairs to machinery, the collection of firewood and the emptying of sanitary pans), attending to complaints and requests from staff and inmates, office work, the preparation of reports for Head Office, the supervision of the issue of rations, school attendance, the organisation of medical care for sick inmates and funerals.

Brodie had a low opinion of Aborigines. He believed that they had "the mind of a child" and was convinced that they could not survive outside the settlement. In 1924 Aboriginal men at the settlement complained to Copping on one of his visits that Brodie regularly called them together for lectures during which he berated
them for being "thieves and liars". He used his powers to discipline Aborigines by punishing and belittling them in a variety of ways: inmates were beaten by the settlement trackers with sticks, belted with a cat o' nine tails, or had their ears boxed by Brodie in public. In 1926 Brodie went so far as to tar and feather a nineteen year old youth in front of the settlement inmates and staff. Although Aldrich received reports from Copping on Brodie's activities, he did nothing and it was Neville, on his return to the Department in 1926, who took the necessary steps to remove Brodie.

The white staff were assisted in maintaining discipline by a small number of Aboriginal men appointed as "trackers" or "police" under the 1916 Regulations to the 1905 Aborigines Act. They stood in the position of "trusty" which is typically found in closed institutions. Rowley (1978) points out that trusties are both "traitors" and "victims" in the closed institution. Recruited from the ranks of inmates, they receive certain rewards from their position such as status, power over the other inmates and material benefits which give them a "stake" in the continuity of the system and they support institutional authority by keeping the inmates divided and suspicious of each other. At the same time they are not accepted as equals by the staff running the institution and are usually openly ostracised and shunned by their fellow inmates.

The "trackers" at Moore River played a vital role in controlling the other residents by reporting on rebellious behaviour in the camp, tracking escapees, administering punishments and supervising inmates imprisoned in the "Boob". Their intermediary position in the settlement population was reflected in the location of their quarters which were situated near the "Boob", away from the staff quarters and the camp. A significant number of trackers were originally from the
north. Some had been brought down by their employers to work on farms in the south and, having married local Aboriginal women, had chosen to remain in the area. They were frequently sent to Moore River settlement after repeated convictions for alcohol related offences or for challenging the authority of the police. This reflected the intended reformatory role of the settlement, as did the occasional practice of sending Kimberley Aborigines to the settlement after their release from Fremantle Prison or after their acquittal in Perth on such serious charges as attempted murder. These men usually had few ties with the predominantly southwest settlement population and this left them particularly dependent on the white administrators of the settlement. As such they were vulnerable victims of the European administered institutional process. The white Superintendents encouraged the trackers to strictly control the other inmates and the ways in which they used their powers led to their virtual ostracisation by their fellows while they also remained outside the closed circle of white staff.

The trackers frequently administered harsh punishments to the other inmates and they were said to have patrolled the settlement armed with truncheons and big sticks; one even carried a spear tipped with glass. Clara Jackimarra recalls that they were

...one of the things I hated about the settlement.....They would flog a person who would not do what they were told and put them in the jailhouse with only bread and water for food.  

She would have been whipped by one of the trackers for staying late in the dormitory one morning, had not a young man from the compound, Thomas Bropho, intervened. Another woman remembered having her hair shaved by a tracker after she back-answered a staff member.
Aboriginal "Policeman" ready for duty,

Moore River Native Settlement, 1920s
men appointed to these positions refused to inflict such punishments and were removed from the job. Bob Allen, an Aboriginal originally from the Kimberleys who was sent to Fremantle Prison for bashing a policeman and then sent to Moore River on his release, was taken off the job after he refused to whip a group of children for disobedience and "taking a walk without the matron's permission".76

During the 1920s the inmates became an increasingly mixed population as children, in particular, were sent in from various parts of the state rather than just the southern districts as Neville had originally intended. The inmates now included traditional people of the full descent, fringe dwellers from town camps, people who had worked in the wider community for most of their lives, and those with an institutional background gained either in the settlements or in missions. Most were taken there against their will, either under Ministerial warrant or under the legal guardianship of the Chief Protector. Generally they were people who were dependent on the Department for their support (the elderly, sick and infirm), children, and those Aborigines whose behaviour had attracted the attention of the local police or the Department. A small number had come voluntarily to rejoin their families, find marriage partners or simply because it was the last avenue of assistance available to them. Charlie Sandstone was in his late teens when he moved voluntarily to the settlement. He was taken from his family at the age of six and brought up at New Norcia. He had no family to turn to and he went to the settlement because "all the Nyungars were there, and all the girls, and I thought I'll find somebody".77

Most Aborigines greatly feared the prospect of being sent to Moore River and they viewed it as a very real and ever present threat.
Aborigines at Moore River Native Settlement, 1920s
One Aboriginal woman harking back to those days recalls that the people were

...terribly touchy with this Moore River. They were terrible frightened. No word of a lie. They were cruel frightened.

People sent to the settlement were wrenched from the rounds of their daily lives, usually without any prior warning. In 1921 Aborigines at Laverton were decoyed into the local police station on the pretext of being served with food by the police. However, once inside, the doors were closed on them and they were kept under lock and key until the train that was to take them from Laverton to Moore River was ready to start. The police were later said to have acted entirely on their own initiative as they had decided that the Aborigines were a "nuisance" around the town.

The settlement became a final destination for most adults, while for the children and young people it was supposedly a temporary stop before they were channelled into employment in the wider community. For all it meant a dramatic break with their former way of life and families. The cost of travel to the settlement and the Department's opposition to visiting meant that few of their relatives could visit them and they often lost contact with their families altogether. This was particularly the case for the children. Most had no family at the settlement and no way to find out about their people and, in some cases, even where they had come from. Their situation was exacerbated by the Department's practice of arbitrarily assigning names to many of the children on their arrival at the settlement; many grew up never knowing their family name. Many parents attempted in vain to have their children returned to them from the settlement or at least to obtain permission to visit them, while their children were led to believe by the white staff that their parents were no
Life for the children in the compound was a strict and dismal routine. In the settlement school, one untrained teacher was responsible for instructing more than one hundred children of varying ages who were arranged in classes graded from Infants to Third Standard in the school hall. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that the State Psychologist, Miss Stoneman, concluded after administering intelligence tests to the children in 1926 that 75 per cent could be expected to reach Third Standard, and the remaining 25 per cent were only capable of achieving Fourth Standard. She applauded the fact that the children were not being educated according to Education Department standards and recommended the introduction of a curriculum more appropriate to the children’s supposed ability and future way of life. In addition to instruction in basic numeracy and literacy, she recommended that training be introduced in the following areas: building a shack, making a bed and fire, making soap and pottery for their own use, nose cleaning drill, the correct disposal of waste, simple laundry techniques, the use of cutlery, setting and clearing tables, sweeping a room and preparing a garden bed for seedlings. Some of her recommendations were subsequently built into the school programme at Moore River.

Play activities were strongly discouraged by Aldrich and in 1924 he chastised the children’s attendants for taking the children on nature walks and swimming after school and during the school holidays (which were spent at the settlement). Instead the children were assigned chores around the settlement compound and at 7.30 p.m. they were locked into their dormitories for the night. The children lived and slept in the same clothes during the week and on Saturday mornings they had a bath and were given a change of clothes. Irene
Farrell grew up in the compound during the early 1920s, and she recalls that they wore the same outfit in summer and winter: "a dress and denim underpants and a woollen under-shirt". On cold winter mornings the children had to warm themselves in front of small fires which they made in kerosene tins. The food served to the children was far below their daily nutritional requirements. Irene Farrell commented that it was "a wonder we all survived on the food we got". Breakfast consisted of "a bit of porridge with saccharine in it and a cup of tea". Some days an apple was provided for morning tea and for lunch the children were served "a plate of soup made out of bones, sheep heads and things like that, no vegetables". Dinner consisted of "a slice of bread with jam and a cup of tea". By way of economy, the children were not provided with cutlery and thus had to eat with their hands.

The children frequently rebelled against their dismal existence. Those with parents in the camp devised ways of escaping from the dormitories to visit them during the night and older girls and boys arranged secret meetings away from the ever-watching eyes of the staff. Many children attempted to escape from the settlement in a bid to rejoin their parents on the outside but were tracked by the settlement trackers, given a beating and placed in the Boob. This was a "square wooden room, covered in corrugated iron and there was a barbed wire fence around it". Young people were put in there for up to a fortnight at a time, often in total isolation. Their food was brought to them by the trackers and they were provided with a bucket as a toilet. Their friends and relatives would come and talk to them through the cracks and some pushed blankets through a small hole in the side of the Boob, thereby risking punishment themselves. However, this brutal punishment did not deter the
Aboriginal "Police" outside the "Boob"
at Moore River Native Settlement, 1920s
children from running away repeatedly.

As the children grew up they were assigned more chores around the compound and this constituted the major part of their "vocational training". Girls and young women were sent to work in the sewing room and Irene Farrell recalls that

...whenever there was a big order I used to have to leave school and go down to the sewing room and help out there...I used to have to do the belts on the machine, and the button holes, you know and put the buttons on.

The young women were paid two shillings a week and were also given a small quota of chocolates. The young women's "training" in domestic duties consisted of cleaning out the staff quarters and dormitories and working in the children's dining room. Meanwhile the boys and young men were "trained" in the heavier work around the compound and in farm labouring. Some young people had more responsible jobs. Charlie Sandstone worked in the compound store weighing out rations for distribution to the adults in the camp and helped in the distribution of rations each Tuesday and Friday. Alma Bell, who was sent to Carrolup from Milly Milly Station in the north as a child and who married Charlie Sandstone in the late 1920s, did typing in the Superintendent's office. Such useful workers were encouraged to remain at the settlement. Other 'trainees' were sent out to work, the young men as farm labourers and station hands and the young women as domestics.

Despite their inadequate training, there was a constant demand for domestic servants from Moore River. This reflected employers' difficulties in finding domestic workers and the low wages demanded by the Department on behalf of the young women. In addition most trainees, after a few short lessons from their employers, proved
most able at their work. The young women were usually pleased to
go out to work as it meant getting away from the settlement. Irene
Farrell was fourteen when she was sent out to her first job as a
domestic on a station near Cue. She had happy memories of her time
there. She recalls that the family "treated me real good. I
was treated like one of the family....I had my own room, and I ate
with the family. I was really one of them". Most young women were
not so lucky. One young woman sent to work for a family at
Wyalkatchem was quartered in a hessian hut 150 yards from the house.
She was unable to lock the door to the hut and on her first night
there a white workman attempted to break into her hut to sexually
assault her. Another trainee was informed by her employer that
she would have to buy an entire new tea set valued at £4 after she
broke a single cup from the existing set. When she wrote to the
Department requesting money from her meagre savings, held on her
behalf by the Department, an officer from the Department queried
the request and her employer replied that she had simply been trying
to get the girl to work harder and more conscientiously. The young
woman retorted that her employer was a most difficult person who
found fault with everything she did.

As has been indicated, the Department closely supervised the
financial affairs of the young people while they were in employment.
Part or all of their wages were sent in to the Department and placed
in special Trust Accounts. Wage levels for the trainees were
decided on by the Department and part of the money due to the children
and young people was to be paid directly to the Department to be
placed in special Trust Accounts held in the employee's name. Wages
due to children aged between fourteen and sixteen were paid in toto
to the Department. Irene Farrell's wage of 2/6d was forwarded to
the Department and her employers told her that it "had to go to Mr Neville". Wages increased slowly in relation to the good conduct and experience of the trainees. During the 1930s the young women in domestic service were paid 7/6d per week, of which they received 2/6d as "pocket money", the rest going to the Department. After a year this increased to 12/6d a week with 5/- set aside as pocket money for the personal use of the young woman. After several years of domestic service and with a sustained record of good behaviour, young women could earn up to 25/- a week. Again, part of this was sent to the Department.

The Department strictly controlled the way money from the Trust Accounts was spent. All requests had to be made to Head Office, detailing what was to be done with the money. They were frequently for items of clothing and shoes. Departmental officers were sent out to purchase the items which were forwarded by mail to the young women. Requests for substantial amounts of money were thoroughly investigated. One young woman who had requested money from her account to buy a banjo objected to this and wrote to the Department stating "I am no child. I don't want to be rude but I do think I should have my money when I want it".

Few of the young people were able to establish themselves successfully outside Moore River. Their own institutional background militated against this. Goffman (1961) points out that institutional life is not conducive to the development of the work ethic. Inmates' days are ordered and scheduled for them and their basic needs provided for, thus they develop different motives for work and different attitudes to those generally held on the "outside". The suppression of "meaningful domestic experience" in institutions also acts to hinder individuals in their attempts to create their own meaningful
family-based lives outside the institution. Young people at Moore River were also poorly trained and continued Departmental control over their employment prevented them from learning to compete as free agents on the labour market. Many found life on the outside difficult due to white prejudice and their loneliness without their friends and, in some cases, families at the settlements. The Department decided on their place of employment and they were frequently sent to remote farms and pastoral stations away from the "temptations" of town life and far from their friends and familiar surroundings. Combined with the strict control of the Department and their employers over their activities during their leisure hours, this prevented most young people from developing a circle of friends outside the settlement. Many had lost contact with their families and those who had retained some ties were deliberately discouraged by the Department from mixing with family members. Thus, when most of the young people were on holidays or out of work they had no alternative but to return to the settlement.

A good number of young people married young men or women they had met in the compound, but to do so they had to get the permission of the Chief Protector. This permission was frequently refused, thereby causing much heartbreak to the couples involved. One man stated that he was told that he was not "good enough" to marry the woman he had chosen because he was "after too many girls" while another young woman was told she could not marry "her boy" because he would not be able to support her financially. Some couples who were aware of their rights under the 1905 Aborigines Act went ahead and married while they were away from the settlement working or on holidays. Others attempted to elope together from the settlement. They were invariably tracked down and punished with beatings
or imprisonment in the Boob.

Some couples granted permission to marry during the 1920s were allowed to move off the settlement and several were later reported to be living in fringe camps in the Perth area. However, most moved into the camp at the settlement after their marriage and the camp became their permanent home. Irene Farrell married Seymour Flower at Moore River in 1929. He was originally from the Albany district and had lived at Carrolup from 1916 until the move to Moore River in 1922. There he met Irene and when he was sent out to work as a station hand near Kalgoorlie he wrote to her regularly. Finally they sought Chief Protector Neville’s permission to marry. After their marriage they moved into the camp at the settlement where Irene’s mother, Annie Newell, was already living and their first child was born there in 1931. They remained at Moore River until the late 1930s when the Department arranged for them to move to the Roelands Native Farm which was opened near Brunswick Junction in 1938.92

The two hundred or so adults in the camp lived in a state of limbo. While few had any chance of leaving the settlement, they were regarded as a nuisance by the white staff and as a threat to their work with the children. They were left largely to themselves and there was little for them to do. The mothers cared for their children until they were taken from them, usually at school age, and placed in the compound. They had little alternative but to accept the loss of their children and from this time their contacts with them were limited and strictly supervised. Some cared for the sick and elderly people in the camp while a few found work in the compound helping with the children or in the settlement "hospital". The able men were sent out to gather firewood and hunt game and also assisted in farm work. For this they received sticks of tobacco and extra
rations of meat, while those with more demanding jobs such as team driving were paid "pocket money" of five to ten shillings a week which they were allowed to spend on extra food items at the settlement store. These workers had a greater chance of seeing their children in the compound and could escape the monotony of the camp; they also played a minor role in the operation of the settlement.

The camp was situated on the river bank, about three quarters of a mile from the compound. Conditions there differed little from those in the town camps during the pre-war years. The people lived in tents or humpies of iron and wood with dirt floors. They were obliged to wash their clothes and bathe themselves in the river and they carted the same water in kerosene tins to their camps for domestic use. Irene Farrell recalls that some of the people did not own a change of clothes and after washing their one set of clothes and spreading them to dry on bushes near the river they would sit in the water until their clothes dried. While a few of the people had bag toilets of their own, most simply had to relieve themselves in the bush around the camp. Many residents made considerable effort to keep their camps clean, sweeping them out with brooms made of ti-tree, and some had irons which they heated in the fire to press their clothes. Like the children in the compound they wore the drab uniform of clothes produced from the settlement sewing room.

There was little the people could do to break the monotony of their lives and to blot out the drab environment in which they were forced to live. The few avenues of activity open to them were followed with an intensity and determination quite out of proportion to the activity itself. Goffman (1961) in his study of institutional life refers to these activities as "removal activities" or "kicks" and their avid pursuit by inmate populations as "overdetermination".
The activity itself, rather than its goal or purpose, becomes the
source of satisfaction for the inmates as it provides them with
temporary release from the drabness of the immediate environment
and a feeling of living for themselves and having some control over
their immediate circumstances. As in most institutions, these
"removal activities" such as gossiping, reminiscing about the old
days and gambling were favourite pastimes for adults in the camp
at Moore River. Many of them played poker all day long, gambling
for money, tobacco, buttons, hair clips and pins. There were also
cricket and football matches with visiting teams from New Norcia
and Moora and the occasional dance at the settlement school hall.
Irene Farrell recalls that:

Everybody rolled up for that. We did old
time dancing, waltzes, barn-dancing, and
one of us would play the accordion. And we
used to have a bit of talent too. My husband's
brother recited poetry he learned out of school
books. The Man from Snowy River was one of
his favourites. And some of the men and
women were really solid singers.\textsuperscript{93}

The more traditional people from the north and the goldfields also
held corroborees in their camps. They decorated themselves with
chalk and clay from the river banks and the people from the camps
would gather in a ring to watch, the women often being ordered to
cover their heads during certain men's dances. The children and
staff occasionally attended these corroborees and the Superintendents
appear to have been fairly tolerant of them, although they refused
to allow any which involved initiation rites.\textsuperscript{94}

"Forbidden" activities also provided a strong source of satis-
faction or "kicks" for the inmates and a means of expressing their
opposition to their institutionalised way of life. These took a
variety of forms from stubborn non-cooperation to violence aimed
at the white staff or other residents in the camp. The deliberate breaking of rules such as entering the compound at night without permission and holding secret sexual liaisons, particularly between young women from the compound and men from the camp, were common. There were also frequent attempts to escape from the settlement, notably the Aborigines sent to the settlement from Laverton in 1921 who managed to escape en masse soon after their arrival. Charlie Sandstone recalls that the trackers were sent out to bring them back

...but they were a little bit frightened to go there and find them. Because they was a mob. They'd say yes and no, but you wouldn't get them to go out there and track them up. They pretended to look that's all.\footnote{93}

Although some Laverton people reportedly made it back to their own country, most were not so lucky and they were tracked down and thrown into the Boob. In 1925, in an effort to cut down on absconding, Aldrich recommended that repeated absconders be transferred to Moola Bulla in the north where their unfamiliarity with the territory and the local Aboriginal communities would act as a deterrent to further attempts to escape. However, Neville opposed this recommendation and it appears to have been used only in a few isolated instances.\footnote{95}

Certain elements of traditional life continued to play a role in the life of Aborigines in the camp. The \textit{mubarn} men (men with supernatural powers) wielded considerable influence because of their knowledge of sorcery and healing. Although they came from various parts of the state, the most powerful appear to have been those from the north and the goldfields, and one of them was said to have been an elderly man from the north whom Neville praised in his 1920 Annual Report for his skills in growing vegetables at the settlement. While people suffering from major illnesses or injuries went
to the nurses in the compound for medical attention, those suffering from general aches and pains sought relief from the healing powers of the mubarn men. Charlie Sands:one recalls that:

If you had a headache well they'd put you there and they'd suck your head. It makes you bleed so it's good for you and it makes you better. And they had little stones too. They'd have them in their pocket and they'd rub you like, with a stone. They were black and smooth, and they'd rub the stone on your body. I had a headache one day and I got one of these mubarn men and he sucked my head, and then blow and then rub me...And by g'dame, I tell you, I was alright next day.

There were also rumours of mubarn men causing deaths at the request of persons seeking to avenge a personal grievance and making people ill who offended them personally. As a consequence they were accorded considerable respect by the people in the camps and many southwest people in particular followed the attitude of "be nice to them and they'd be nice to you".\textsuperscript{98} For some this was their first close contact with Aboriginal traditions and several young people, amongst them the well-known Aboriginal poet and playwright Jack Davis, who spent some time in the settlement camp during his youth, were profoundly influenced by their experiences. The contact with the more tradition- ally oriented people from the north and the goldfields also served to revitalise certain southwest beliefs and practices, particularly those relating to healing.

Family ties played an important role in the internal allegiances and divisions within the camp and, as marriages within the settlement increased, these kinship networks also increased in size and importance. Other ties cut across or reinforced these kin-based networks. The traditionally-oriented people from the Western Desert, for example, tended to remain apart from the others, living in their
own separate camps, while friendships and enmities established in the compound endured as the young people moved into the camps. A variety of small elites also emerged, some based on traditional factors as in the case of the mubarn men, others derived from involvement with the white staff and the running of the settlement.

In the main the Aborigines treated the white staff with reserve and they were generally resentful of their power over their lives. Irene Farrell recalls that:

There was a lot of tension between the people in the camp and the white people. The Superintendents were all the same, nasty, and they were the lord and master of everything - rations, hidings, everything. We felt like they really owned us and there wasn't much we could do about it. We were miles out in the bush and you couldn't get anywhere. It wasn't much different to being in jail.

As in most closed institutions, information overheard by inmates was quickly relayed to others in the camp, but special care was taken to prevent the white staff from finding out what was happening in the camp. This was done by speaking in their traditional languages and through the use of sign language. Lookouts were posted when important matters were being discussed to warn of the approach of white staff or trackers. The Aborigines were quick to complain to the Department about unsatisfactory staff and to praise those they approved of. When a popular nurse resigned in 1923 the Aborigines sent a petition to the Department requesting that she be reinstated and requesting that the nurse who had been appointed in her place be dismissed on account of her treatment of the Aborigines. However, they could not be certain that such objections would reach Head Office. The Superintendent had the power to ignore any complaints he disapproved of, and it was established practice for
the staff to read and censor all mail to and from the settlement residents. The Aborigines' main opportunity to communicate their complaints to the outside world was through Aldrich's assistant, Copping, during his visits to the settlement. However, the Department rarely took action on the basis of these complaints.

The Town Reserves

In recommending the closure of Carrolup, Aldrich had misjudged the size of the Aboriginal population in the Great Southern and the Aborigines' economic situation. He had also overlooked the lack of alternative camping sites for Aborigines in the area. Aborigines who had used Carrolup as a camping base between jobs and during their holidays were now obliged to find alternative places to camp and this contributed to the movement of Aborigines into towns in the south. As has been discussed, the objections of white residents to the Aborigines' scattered camps in the towns led Aldrich to declare a number of town camping reserves in the south and the number of gazetted town reserves in the south increased from six in 1920 (located at Beverley, Narrogin, Karramarra Wells near Moora, Kellerberrin, Bunbury and Guildford) to thirteen by 1925. These new reserves were situated at Williams, Gnawangerup, Katanning, Albany, Woodinalling, York and Pinjarra.* Aldrich's actions in promoting the development of the town reserves represented a considerable change from policies under Neville who had favoured centralised farming settlements. In contrast to Neville, Aldrich did not seek to force the Aborigines out of the towns, seeing the town reserves as a less expensive alternative to the settlements. Aborigines living there would be able to remain in the labour market and the Department

* For further details on the gazetting of these town reserves see Appendix II.
would not be obliged to provide them with expensive facilities as at Carrolup. This was not a policy decision, rather it evolved in response to the objections of the white townspeople (albeit less strident than in the years 1911 to 1914), the Aborigines' need for camping bases, the Department's concern with economy and its own administrative needs.

There was only one instance of Aborigines being forced out of a town camp through the actions of the Department during the early 1920s. This occurred at Moora. In 1922 the Department received complaints from the police and townspeople about unhygienic conditions in the camp and of feuding between the families, and in the same year a deputation of Moora residents demanded that the Department remove the Aborigines from the town. They accused the Aborigines of stealing fruit, trespassing on private property, damaging fences, gambling and using bad language, and of spreading disease amongst the white residents. Their dogs were also said to be worrying stock and the white residents claimed that the Aborigines had responded to warnings about their behaviour by threatening to burn the farmers' crops. In June Superintendent Campbell from Moore River inspected the camp and recommended that the forty-five residents be moved to the settlement. However, when he returned in August most of the families had moved to avoid being sent to Moore River. Campbell recommended that the few remaining elderly people in the camp be sent to the settlement under warrant, along with several apparently neglected children. The Moora reserve was subsequently cancelled and Aborigines still working in the district were directed to camp at the reserve at Karramarra Wells several kilometres from Moora. Some families subsequently moved to a public reserve at Walebing, a little closer to town, while others moved across to work and camp
in the Northam district. 101

While the reserves provided the Aborigines with greater freedom than the settlements, they were nevertheless a poor alternative. Most Aborigines were not keen to settle near the towns, preferring instead to live and work in the bush and on the farms. They were well aware that they were not welcome in the towns and their treatment prior to and during the war years had served to reinforce their intention to "never go near white people much". 102 Being in town meant living in unsatisfactory conditions under the watchful eye of the police and facing the resentment of the white townspeople. It also meant the distinct possibility of being sent to a settlement by a zealous policeman or by the Department. The sites chosen as reserves were suited to the wishes of the white town residents and the police rather than to the needs of the Aborigines. The Aborigines chose camping sites providing ready access to water and timber used for firewood and shelters, with an adjacent area for their horses and carts and in close proximity to the stores in town and the local hospital. They frequently chose to live in small family groups dotted around the town rather than congregating at the one spot. The white residents favoured centralised camps located far enough from the town to prevent the Aborigines being a "nuisance" but close enough to be used a labour pool by local employers. The police also favoured centralised camps as this facilitated their role in controlling the movement of Aborigines around the town and their access to alcohol. The local government authorities and the police played the major role in the selection of the sites and final approval was given by the Department. No notice was taken of the wishes of the Aborigines in selecting the sites. The reserves were usually located at least one mile from the town on inferior and useless land.
Williams Reserve, 1930s
The Gnowangerup reserve, for example, was situated between the town rubbish dump and sanitary depot while the Kellerberrin reserve was located on the site of the former town rubbish dump, one block away from the sanitary depot. The reserves were generally small in area (usually five to ten acres) and lacked the basic requirements the Aborigines sought in their camp sites.

Police in the towns were instructed to move Aborigines to the reserves and to ensure that in future all Aborigines camped on the reserves. Most Aborigines refused to move. The Williams Roads Board informed the Department in 1923 that the people would not use the reserve as there was no water supply there. Police at Gnowangerup reported that the Aborigines objected to the flies and the smell coming from the rubbish dump and sanitary depot. It was only gradually, as a result of increasing local and Departmental pressure, that the Aborigines reluctantly moved onto the reserves.

Facilities and services on the reserves were virtually non-existent. The Aborigines provided their own shelters which varied from tents to mia mias of various shapes and sizes and humpies made of corrugated iron, flattened kerosene tins, old wheat bags and bush timber. A few residents had their own portable hessian toilets.

The local town councils and roads boards deemed it the responsibility of the Department to provide water, ablution and sanitary facilities and, since the Aborigines did not pay rates, they were considered ineligible for even basic sanitary and rubbish services. The Department, intent on keeping its expenditure to a minimum, was equally unwilling to provide amenities for the reserves and at the most was prepared to assist with water and occasionally with the provision of sanitary facilities. Rather than arranging for the reserves to be connected to the town water supply, the Department usually requested
the police to cart water to the reserves. The police frequently took exception to this chore. In 1923 John H. Nipper, a resident of the Narrogin reserve, complained to the Department that the police were failing in their duty to transport water to the reserve and that when he approached them about it they told him to "go to hell". At Gnowangerup the Department agreed to provide funding for a dam on the reserve but water seepage from the adjacent rubbish and sanitary depots rendered the water undrinkable except during the heavy winter rains. For the rest of the year water had to be carted to the reserve.

The issue of facilities frequently brought the local municipal bodies and the Department into conflict. In 1923 the Department rejected an offer by the Williams Roads Board to share the costs of erecting a central shelter shed on the reserve, connecting it to the town water supply and providing sanitary facilities. In the following year the Board threatened to have the reserve cancelled if the Department did not install sanitary facilities to cater for the 350 Aborigines camped there. Reluctantly the Department arranged for two toilets to be installed. In 1923 the Roads Board purchased all land adjoining the reserve, including the well where the Aborigines drew water, for the sum of £30, and then informed the Department that Aborigines would be permitted to use the well only on condition that it contributed £60 to the costs of purchase of the land.

The establishment of central camps for the Aborigines also increased the control of the police over the local populations. They regularly patrolled the camps and continued to exert a strict control over Aborigines' access to alcohol. Lancell Williams recalls that the Gnowangerup police would arrest Aborigines
Group at Narrogin Reserve, late 1920s
...for just the smell. The police'd come along and question you about nothing and then he'd move over the windy side and ask why you'd been drinking. As long as you got the smell on you. You only got to get wine on your clothes. 110

The Katanning police charged Aborigines with drunkenness under the Police Act and receiving alcohol under the 1905 Aborigines Act Amendment Act on the basis of the same evidence, a practice which the Crown Solicitor later condemned as being totally contrary to the practice of Australian law, the maxim of which he stated was "prosecution not persecution". 111 It is hardly surprising that Aborigines quickly built up long records of alcohol related convictions. One man from the Katanning district had over 600 convictions when he died at the age of seventy in the late 1970s, and police records of the 1920s suggest that Aboriginal convictions in the south were overwhelmingly related to incidents involving alcohol. The Aborigines' movement around the towns and their access to town facilities remained strictly controlled. Most towns had an effective curfew: Aborigines had to be out of town by sunset and this was strictly enforced by the police. They were banned from the hotels and from most local entertainment. At Gnowangerup they were refused entry to the town cinema and cafes and were prohibited from swimming in the same pool as the white townsfolk. Nor were they welcome in the churches and it was not until the Depression years that certain local church bodies began to express a concern for the conditions in which Aborigines were forced to live at the camps. Many doctors and hospitals refused to attend to Aboriginal patients. The Gnowangerup Hospital refused entry to Aborigines and even emergency cases were sent to the government hospital at Katanning. One Aboriginal man died from a perforated appendix after
being rushed to Katanning Hospital from Gnowangerup in 1927, and at least three others died during the 1920s and early 1930s after being refused entry to Katanning Hospital. The Moora Hospital also refused to admit Aboriginal patients. In 1920 local Aborigines informed the Department of the hospital's policy and that the local doctor, Dr Myles, was threatening to "refuse to have anything to do with them". In the following year they complained that Dr Myles had failed to visit a sick man at the town camp until six days after the illness was reported and the man had subsequently died. The doctor had also refused to treat a baby taken to his surgery and the baby had died that very afternoon. They concluded that "if the Government [was] paying him for our sickness. Would you please see that better care should be taken for the Aborigines of the Native camp". Local authorities also continued to exclude Aboriginal children from most schools in the southwest. In 1922 parents of white children at the Koogan State School demanded the expulsion of five Aboriginal children on the grounds that their "closeness" was not conducive to the "physical or moral good" of their own children. The Education Department authorised the expulsion and Aldrich recommended that the children be sent to Moore River to be educated. The actions of the departments and the attitudes of the white parents led many families to keep away from schools altogether. Cliff Humphries was a young boy during the 1920s and he recalls that no one in his family attended school because

they wouldn't take us see. And we was frightened of going 'cause what happened when we go to school. "Nigger, nigger, nigger, nigger" they all call us see. Well, we was frightened to go near white people.

Instead, Cliff accompanied his grandfather working on farms in the Kellerberrin district and from him he learnt "all the law about
Nyungars" and "Nyungar talk".  

The stringency of the exclusion of Aborigines did vary between towns and Cliff Humphries recalls that "Nyungars were treated differently in different places, different with schooling, and different with Shire Councils and that". At the same time the barriers between whites and Aborigines were never total: white farmers interacted with their Aboriginal employees in the workplace and in some towns Aborigines were permitted to participate in local sporting events. Some farmers took pride in training Aboriginal runners to take part in popular local and regional foot race events while a number of Aboriginal footballers were allowed to play in local teams. Some attracted the attention of the professional football clubs. Eric, Bill and Maley Hayward of the Gnowangerup district were signed up as members of the South Fremantle Football Club in the early 1930s, thereby becoming the first professional league players in the state.*

The Aborigines adjusted to their difficult situation as best they could. Generally only a few older people lived permanently on the reserves although a central core of families used them as a base. The men would work for farmers in their "runs", sometimes leaving their families behind in the protection and companionship of the camp. When it suited the employer, the whole family would pack up and set off travelling by horse and cart or on foot and they would do the job together. The families associated with a particular town reserve were usually related by ties of kinship and

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* Eric Hayward's son, Eric Hayward, is currently writing a history of his family which will deal in detail with the football career of his father and uncles.
Football Team, n.d.
marriage. The different family groupings were reflected in the layout of the camps and each family had its own separate camping area. The families had many reciprocal ties: sharing food, assisting each other in caring for the children, and the women acting as midwives for each other. Gambling provided a regular source of entertainment as well as serving to redistribute money and goods within the camps. Cliff Humphries recalls that "you'd have a good laugh" when you won and your opponent would attempt to sell you something to even the score, and so the money would circulate around the camp.

The town camps also provided a temporary home for Aborigines coming in from camps in the bush. The agricultural shows were an important time for families from the surrounding districts to get together. Lilly Hayward's family

...used to go to the Kojonup show every year. It was in October or November, and we used to meet a lot of people, all the Nyungars. I'd have a new dress, new shoes. We camped out on the reserve...At night at the reserve they'd sit down and talk about the hunting and how many kangaroos they shot and where was the good place, the next place to go and find some more.

The reserve also provided a ready reference for those visiting other towns. Related families frequently visited between reserves, sharing companionship, food and entertainment and these visits also provided the young people with an opportunity to meet and establish relationships which frequently led to de facto relationships and marriage. Dances accompanied by a piano accordion were often held around the camp fires at the reserves and the bush camps, and hockey was also a favourite pastime. This appears to have been a traditional game, certainly the Aborigines claim it to be so, and they recall that they had their own rules governing play in the game. Hockey sticks
were made from branches of the jam tree, shaped by placing them in the fire for a while and then herding them into shape. Balls were made from woody knobs cut from tree trunks or suckers. At Gnawangerup teams were sometimes divided according to traditional moiety membership and Lancel Williams recalls that wordungmat would frequently team up against manitchmat. The people would travel long distances to play hockey and Alma Garlett recalls that people in the Quairading district

...used to go mad for it. Men, women, girls and boys, and what didn’t have ways to go in a turn-out, as long as somebody took their gear, their swag and their tucker box, they’d walk. Just to go and play hockey.

These more positive aspects of reserve living came from a combination of enduring traditional beliefs, ties and obligations and the Aborigines’ response to the difficult situation in which they were forced to live. In this way the pattern of reserve living came to resemble those of dispossessed people living in poverty throughout the world. Like such people, the Aborigines also experienced considerable stress and strains. The prolonged effects of racism and discrimination shown by white townspeople were a daily part of their lives, and inadequate facilities and poor levels of nutrition meant that the people’s health was often poor. Child mortality remained high. The resentment caused by their consistent exclusion and discriminatory treatment at the hands of the white community often led to drinking in the camps and outbursts of violence directed at those closest at hand – the other residents of the camp – rather than the people’s real adversaries in the town. Enmities also grew up between some families in the camps and feuding became a feature of life in some districts. While the camps helped to
maintain certain aspects of Nyungar tradition and folklore, the continued lack of education for the children meant that their future employment possibilities remained extremely limited.

The feelings of the reserve dwellers about the situation in which they were forced to live were clearly expressed in a letter sent to the Department in 1923 from four men from the Gnowangerup district: Moses Whyman, Wilfred Morrison, Fred Winmar and Robert Starlight, following the shooting of a licensed hunting dog by the local police. They wrote:

We worked Gnowangerup or helped to farming the country, now the District is in good going order, they don't want to see us blacks about but a few years ago was very glad of us... If anything goes rong or stole a rush for the camp, a cry at once it must be the black fellows. What innocent people the whites are hear...they would never steal. I know there is a few bad in black and white but it is not all the Natives that is bad....Making them camp on the sanetree which is not fit to put pigs let alone human flesh, if you cant do something for us let us know...then we will get the paper to work for us, on a public opinion, it is time something had been done, we are all going to club together, to get Justus.126

Conclusion

The 1920s saw the culmination of changes stemming from the pre-war years and the establishment of patterns of living which were to dominate the lives of Aborigines in the south for many years to come. The post-war revival of land settlement programmes, while providing Aborigines with temporary employment and relief from their economic difficulties, placed further restrictions on their movement through the country and robbed them of many of their camping places. This was compounded by the closure of Carrolup settlement in 1922.
As a result, many Aboriginal families developed the pattern of camping on or adjacent to farmers' land while in employment, and camping near towns while out of work. Others left their families in town camps while they went out to work. Objections from white town residents to the camping sites chosen by Aborigines led to the creation of gazetted camping reserves outside a number of towns in the south. Established on small areas of worthless land and lacking even basic amenities, these reserves nevertheless became "home bases" for many Aboriginal families in the south. There they could find companionship with relatives and assistance in time of need, while also having access to local employers and limited access to services offered in the towns. The Aborigines' presence in the towns and their contacts with white residents were strictly limited by strong formal and informal rules of behaviour. The harsh, routine mode of existence at Moore River settlement was the feared alternative to life in the camps for most Aborigines in the south from the early 1920s. Following the closure of Carrollup it was the only Departmental institution in the south and it quickly became overcrowded and its facilities over-used. It took on a range of functions, none of which could be adequately carried out given the low funding levels provided by the Department and the rigid institutionalised way of life which evolved at the settlement during the early 1920s. Rather it provided the basis for the development of an enduring institutionalised Aboriginal community in the south.
FOOTNOTES - Chapter Six

7. Ibid.
8. CS/1047/1923.
9. LS/4610/1918.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. CS/361/1919; CS/1185/1923.
15. Ibid.
17. CS/2458/1922.
18. CS/391/1922.
19. CS/2072/1923.
24. CS/1544/1921.
29. CS/391/1922.
30. CS/2870/1921.
31. CS/347/1921.
32. A/97/1927.
33. AR/1921.
34. CS/742/1921.
35. CS/347/1921.
37. CS/227/1921; CS/769/1921.
38. Irene Farrell, Appendix I, Interview 3.
39. CS/2090/1921.
40. CS/208/1921.
41. CS/1902/1921.
42. CS/662/1921.
43. CS/618/1921.
44. CS/507/1922.
45. A/393/1927.
46. A/403/1927.
47. CS/401/1921.
48. AR/1919; CS/387/1922.
49. A/393/1927.
50. *Ibid*.
52. *Ibid*.
53. A/393/1927.
54. *Ibid*.
55. *Ibid*.
60. *GSH* 22/7/1922.
61. AR/1924.
62. CS/1897/1925.
65. CS/387/1924.
68. CS/387/1924.
70. *Ibid*.
71. A/97/1927.
72. CS/387/1924.
79. ST 14/11/1926.
80. A/97/1927.
81. CS/2619/1923.
82. Irene Farrell, Appendix I, Interview 3.
83. Ibid.
85. CS/1261/1921.
86. CS/1262/1921.
87. Irene Farrell, Appendix I, Interview 3.
89. CS/1680/1921.
92. Irene Farrell, Appendix I, Interview 3.
93. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. CS/509/1926.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. CS/1008/1921.
101. CS/213/1921.
103. A/423/1927.
104. A/203/1927.
110. Lancell Williams, Appendix I, Interview 7.
111. A/376/1933.
113. Ibid.
114. CS/285/1921.
115. CS/1130/1922.
117. Ibid.
118. Lilly Hayward, Appendix I, Interview 5.
120. CS/2072/1923.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Introduction

The late 1920s saw the development of an impetus for change in Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia. Chief Protector Neville's return to the Department in 1926 brought a strong and aggressive leadership to Aboriginal administration and he actively campaigned for a range of reforms intended to improve the situation of Aborigines in the state. Alarmed at the continued increase in the part-Aboriginal population in the south and evidence of growing economic hardship for many families, he demanded increased funding for the Department and greater legislative controls over such persons to enable the Department to achieve the full implementation of its social assimilation policies through the "native settlement" scheme. However, he was thwarted in his endeavours by the indifference of the state government and lack of support from other government departments. Under Neville's direction, the Department became increasingly authoritarian and repressive in its treatment of Aborigines. A new missionary initiative in the south during the late 1920s brought relief for some Aboriginal families. The missionaries set up depots on established town camps and provided a range of services to Aborigines in the camps and surrounding districts, suggesting a positive alternative to the centralised settlement scheme advocated by Neville. This difference in approach, together with Neville's antipathy towards missionaries and his proprietorial attitude towards Aborigines, inevitably brought him into conflict with the missionaries and this served to hinder their work. The late 1920s also saw the emergence of limited organised protest by Aborigines in the south. They demanded the removal of legal restrictions under which they were obliged to
live and an end to Departmental control over their lives. Their demands were diametrically opposed to those of Neville and he successfully blocked their efforts to effect changes. At the same time, a number of influential humanitarians and academics in the eastern states began to push for a review of existing policies in Aboriginal affairs and from this emerged two new policies of particular importance for part-Aborigines. Despite Neville's attempts to promote some of these new ideas they had little immediate impact in Western Australia. However, they were to play a part in the early 1930s.

**Neville and the Department: 1926-1930**

In 1926 further changes were made to the administration of Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia. Following the closure of the Department of the North West in that year, the Aborigines Department (now separated from Fisheries) resumed responsibility for the administration of Aboriginal affairs throughout the state under the direction of Chief Protector Neville. This arrangement left Neville free to focus his attention on Aboriginal matters, although it also meant a considerable reduction in his status and in the range of his powers. While Neville was dedicated to his work he was also ambitious, and his now relatively lowly professional standing was hardly to his liking. The Aborigines Department had remained small, politically unimportant and at the bottom on the public service hierarchy and the lack of resources and cooperation from other government departments made the work of its officers particularly frustrating. Sir Paul Hasluck recalls that Neville responded to his changed circumstances by "trying to make his job more important than any of his administrators, departmental or ministerial, thought it was", and by
asserting himself as "virtually the sole proprietor of aborigines in Western Australia".¹

Over the years Neville had developed a strong position on Aboriginal policy and had built up a reputation in the state as an expert on the administration of Aboriginal affairs. During the late 1920s he dominated his Ministers in the Collier Labor ministry, J.W. Hickey and William Kitson, both of whom had little previous experience in Aboriginal affairs, and from this time Neville, rather than the government, determined Aboriginal policy. Neville brooked no opposition to his ideas either from his colleagues and other whites working with Aborigines or from Aborigines themselves, and his frequently arrogant actions and statements during this period served to further alienate him from Aborigines, missionary bodies, other government departments and white interest groups in the state.

Neville remained convinced of the value of the settlements in the south as agents of assimilation and as refuges for the needy. Although he was shocked and angered by the deterioration in conditions at Moore River settlement, he saw the problems there as stemming from inadequacies in administration and funding rather than from inherent flaws in the settlement scheme itself. He was also angered by the closure of Carrolup settlement and was strongly opposed to the reserve camps which had developed in the southern towns during Aldrich's administration. During the late 1920s Neville sought to restore his

¹ J.W. Hickey (MLC, Central Province) was Minister with Portfolio in the Collier Ministry with responsibility for Aboriginal affairs from 1926 to 1928. W.H. Kitson (MLC, West Province), an Englishman by birth with a trade union background, took over ministerial responsibility for the Department as Minister without Portfolio from 1928 to 1930. He was also Minister in charge of the Department from 1936 to 1946 (Bolton, 1961).
original concept of the settlement scheme by introducing improvements at Moore River aimed at making it self-sufficient and by demanding the re-opening of a second settlement in the Great Southern district to which Aborigines in town camps could be moved. At the same time he pressured the government to increase his powers to remove Aborigines to the settlements. However, he was thwarted in his endeavours by official indifference and lack of funding. Meanwhile Neville refused to deal with the deteriorating living conditions in the town camps, holding out for the opening of a settlement instead. His failure to take action angered white and Aboriginal town residents alike and brought him into direct conflict with missionaries from the Australian Aborigines Mission who began working with Aborigines in the Great Southern and eastern wheatbelt districts during the late 1920s.

Neville continued to be dogged in his work by low levels of funding and staff, and growing strains between his Department and other government departments further frustrated his efforts to put his plans into action. The government continued to allocate only minimal funding to the Department and during the late 1920s Neville was expected to provide for virtually all the needs of the state's estimated Aboriginal population of 26,000 from an annual grant of between £27,000 and £30,000. This compared unfavourably with government expenditure in other states: in 1935 Neville calculated that Western Australia spent only £1/10/2d per head per annum on the Aboriginal population compared to £5/5/3d in New South Wales, £13/4/4d in Victoria, £2/10/7d in Queensland and £5/10/10d in South Australia.² (No figures were provided for Federal government expenditure on Aborigines in the Northern Territory although it would certainly have been higher.) Inadequate funds prevented Neville from developing
appropriate staffing levels: he had a staff of only six at Head Office, one Travelling Inspector in the field (dismissed as an economy measure in 1932), and some thirty Departmental employees in the various Aboriginal institutions in the state. While this was an advance from 1905 when the Department had only two officers, it was nevertheless a far cry from the numbers Neville needed to carry out his ambitious plans. Low staffing levels left the Department totally dependent on the services of the police at the local level and in 1927 eighteen out of twenty-one towns in the south had protectors who were also police officers. In Neville's opinion they were as much the officers of the Aborigines Department as of the Police Department, but the actions of the Commissioner of Police during the late 1920s forced him to reconsider this view. During this period the Commissioner instructed his officers that they were to forward all communications relating to Aborigines to his office rather than directly to the Chief Protector of Aborigines. This seriously affected the operation of the Aborigines Department. Neville objected that the information forwarded to him from the Commissioner's office was "stereotyped" and virtually useless for his purposes and that the system prevented him from informing police officers of the expectations of his Department and from gaining their confidence. He also complained that confidential matters of no relevance to the police were passing through police channels and that this was grossly unfair to the Aborigines concerned. However, the Commissioner refused to revoke his instructions. Neville was also angered in 1932 when the Firearms and Guns Act repealed the sections of the 1905 Aborigines Act pertaining to the issue of gun licences and transferred the control of the issuing of licences from the Chief Protector of Aborigines to the Commissioner of Police. Neville saw this as a
further attack on his powers by the police and he was convinced that
the system would further disadvantage Aborigines as the police
believed "on principle" that Aborigines should not have guns.
Although the Commissioner agreed to inform Neville of all applications
for guns from Aborigines and their outcome, he failed to carry this
out. Consequently, by 1934 the number of Aborigines with gun
licences in the state had dropped by 50 per cent. From this time
Neville became increasingly critical of the system of police as local
protectors, although in the absence of any alternative he was obliged
to keep his views to himself and to frame any of his comments on
the work of the police with great care. After his retirement he
wrote that this system had done "more to retard the progress of the
native people than any other".

Neville's relations with the Health Department, on whose co-
operation he relied to provide for the medical care of indigent
Aborigines, were also becoming increasingly strained. Hasluck (1977)
states that during the late 1920s and early 1930s the Health Depart-
ment openly refused to fulfil its duties in relation to Aboriginal
health and he attributes this directly to the "neglect and indiffer-
ence" of senior administrators of the Department. This contributed
to the shocking health conditions observed by Hasluck in 1934 when,
as a reporter for the West Australian, he accompanied members of
the Moseley Royal Commission on its tour of the north and in 1936
when he toured camps in the south to collect information for a series
of articles which were later published in the West Australian.

* Hasluck's articles were published in 1939 in a pamphlet entitled
Our Southern Half-caste Natives and Their Conditions by the Native
Welfare Council.
Meanwhile the Education Department maintained its opposition to the enrolment of Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children in state schools. An amendment to the Education Act in 1928 reiterated the right of the Minister of Education to expel any child whose presence was "injurious to the health, welfare and morality of other children". Subsequent regulations enabled teachers to temporarily suspend children, either on their own initiative, or on the basis of complaints from parents of other children. Although suspensions required the approval of the Education Department, this was, in practice, largely a formality. Thus a single parent could cause the expulsion of Aboriginal pupils while objections from several parents automatically led to expulsion. Neville objected strongly to this arrangement; in his opinion "coloured" children should be allowed to attend school wherever possible. However, without government support he was in no position to intervene. In 1930 the Women's Section of the Primary Producers' Association of Western Australia recommended to Neville that expulsion only be authorised when requested in writing by a majority of the parents. Their objections appear to have been prompted by the recent expulsion of a "clean and well-behaved" part-Aboriginal girl cared for by a police constable and his wife, on the grounds of "colour only". Neville told the women that it was better not to pursue the matter, nevertheless he took steps to look into it further as, according to his records, only one per cent of Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children in the state were receiving a normal education. In reply to his enquiries the Education Department stated that it was obliged to retain "discretionary powers" as some of the children were "quite unsuited to receive their education in ordinary schools". Neville retorted that while the discretionary powers might lie with the Education Department,
in practice it was the Parents and Citizens Associations* which controlled the attendance of Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children. He suggested that circulars be sent around the state enquiring about numbers of school age children and seeking details on the attitudes of local white parents and local expulsions. The Under Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department supported Neville's proposal on the grounds that allowing the children to enter the state education system would be more economical than spending money on settlements and was preferable to the children receiving no education whatsoever. However, the Minister in charge of the Aborigines Department, W.H. Kitson, objected, stating that it was

...out of the question to compel admission of half-castes to State schools. It follows that we must provide for their education in schools especially provided for that purpose and in the present state of the finances that is a very difficult problem.

Neville expressed his very real frustrations in carrying out his duties during this period in the following comment made during an address to the Women's Service Guild in Perth in 1927:

I sometimes sit and writhe in my chair over things that happen in this State, and I cannot alter them. My hands are often tied in many directions and it is quite impossible often to do the things which should be done and which the public expects me to do."

*Parents and Citizens Associations replaced the District Boards of Education during the early 1920s following the passing of the Public Education Acts Amendment Act in 1922. This Act repealed all clauses pertaining to the Boards and laid instead the foundation for the Parents and Citizens Associations. The duties of the Associations included advising on the physical upkeep of school buildings and encouraging regular attendance of school children (E/263/1926). There was strong support from the community for the Associations and by 1927, 222 had been established and the Education Department reported that this had in turn led to a greater interest in schools generally in the community (E/2223/1926).
Despite these difficulties the Aborigines Department extended its activities in the south during the late 1920s and increasing numbers of Aborigines were brought under the restrictions of the 1905 Aborigines Act and the control of the Department. This was due, in part, to deteriorating economic conditions in the south which will be discussed later. Combined with the continuing rapid increase in the Aboriginal population in the area, these placed enormous strains on wage earners attempting to support their families. When the families were forced onto the Department's ration lists they were brought directly to the attention of the officers of the Department. At the same time Neville sought deliberately to extend the influence and control of the Department in the south. This reflected his continuing interest in the "part-Aboriginal problem", his frustrations in attempting to improve the situation of Aborigines in the south and his own nature and view of his role as Chief Protector. Neville saw himself as father figure to all Aborigines: as their guardian and benefactor he was to protect them from exploitation and abuse and at the same time he expected them to conform to his own narrow and puritanical view of appropriate behaviour for Aborigines. He held himself directly responsible for any deviations from these standards of behaviour and indeed he was so held by the wider community. He also insisted on the rigid application of the 1905 Act and Hasluck (1977) recalls that Neville was fond of reminding people that "the Act said the Protector had power to do this or that and so he was right to do it". This created the potential for rigid, highly personalised and authoritarian control of Aborigines. Hasluck recalls that Aborigines could always be found waiting outside Neville's office at the rear of the Chief Secretary's office in Murray Street, Perth.
Neville saw the solution to his many problems in changes to the 1905 Aborigines Act and he began to pressure the government to introduce amending legislation to increase his control over part-Aborigines, to further centralise control over Aboriginal affairs in the hands of the Aborigines Department, and to enable him to take steps to relieve the Department of its financial difficulties. As will be discussed later, following the controversy surrounding reports of a massacre of Aborigines by a posse of settlers and police in the Kimberleys in 1927, the government acceded to some of his demands and in 1929 a Bill to amend the 1905 Aborigines Act, based on Neville's recommendations, was placed before Parliament. Although there was general support for the extension of controls over part-Aborigines the Bill was defeated. This was largely due to the objections of the pastoral lobby to certain provisions pertaining to the employment of Aborigines. The decade closed on a pessimistic note for Neville, nevertheless he was able to take advantage of events during the economic depression of the early 1930s to achieve his goals and in 1936 an even more repressive Bill was introduced and passed by Parliament.

**Moore River Settlement**

Neville was dismayed at the deterioration in conditions at Moore River and took immediate steps to increase Departmental supervision and to introduce improvements there. He informed Superintendent Brodie that the settlement was no longer to function as a "native camp" and warned him that in future, disciplining of the inmates
was to be "mild and firm". All punishments were to be recorded in a special punishment book to be presented for Neville's inspection during his monthly visits to the settlement. Brodie responded by demanding the erection of a barbed wire fence around the perimeter of the compound and the cessation of all visits by Aborigines from outside the settlement. In November 1926 Neville informed the Under Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Department that Brodie had tarred and feathered a young man, and demanded his immediate resignation or dismissal. On 13 November Brodie resigned due to "unsatisfactory health" and "recurrent war troubles" and two months later Arthur J. Neal, an experienced farmer from the Midlands district, was appointed as Superintendent. His wife, a trained nurse who had previously worked at Carrolup, took over as Matron. At the same time funding was made available for the upgrading of the settlement's farming activities and buildings. Extra land was added to the settlement reserve to increase its sheep grazing potential and a pine plantation was started in an effort to develop a timber industry there. In 1929 work commenced on the building of the Midlands District Hospital which was to cater for Aborigines at the settlement and those brought in from the surrounding Midlands district.

Neville's initiatives led to some improvement in conditions at the settlement. In 1928 he reported that the health of the inmates had improved and the incidence of sores, which had been endemic

* Aborigines claim variously that the young man was punished after he was found in the compound dormitories at night when he should have been in the camp, or for stealing a packet of cigarettes. One Aboriginal eyewitness recalls that the white female staff assisted Brodie in tarring and feathering the young man and that the staff were all laughing loudly as they threw white feathers over him (Irene Farrell).
amongst the children, had been reduced. Absconding from the settlement had also decreased. However, the overall impact of these changes was limited. The settlement remained a long way from its goal of self-sufficiency and the Department continued to expend between £5,000 and £5,500 per annum on salaries and rations there. This was due largely to the inferior quality of the land and poor planning while a growing plague of rabbits also retarded the extension of the settlement's agricultural activities. Overcrowding remained a feature of settlement life (the average population was 300) and available buildings and facilities were over-used and dilapidated. The settlement hospital (opened in 1929 and referred to officially as the Midlands District Hospital), of which Neville wrote proudly in his Annual Reports, consisted of a single ward which provided accommodation for male and female patients, including women in labour and patients with communicable diseases such as syphilis. The single bathroom at the hospital doubled as a surgery and on occasion sick toddlers from the camp were kept in the bath tub to prevent them from wandering back to their mothers. The hospital had no resident doctor and relied instead on the services of the doctor at Moora. Serious cases were sent to Mogumber by car and put on the train for Perth to be treated at the Perth Public Hospital. Aborigines from the district surrounding the settlement, convinced that they would be detained at Moore River after receiving medical treatment, strongly resisted attempts to send them to the settlement hospital. Epidemics continued to ravage the population, and in 1930 one hundred and fifty people came down with influenza and there were five deaths. The State Psychologist, Miss Stoneman, stated in her 1929 Annual Report that the one hundred or so children of school age in the compound were underweight for their age, and she recommended that details
Midlands District Hospital, Moore River Native Settlement, early 1930s
of their diet be submitted to the Public Health Department for advice. She also recommended the appointment of a trained kindergarten teacher to work with the fifty children in the infants class. This would leave the existing teacher free to work with the remaining fifty children in Standards One to Three. *

Although Neville reported in 1928 that rates of absconding from the settlement had decreased, the efforts of one man to remove his children during the late 1920s attracted the attention of the Perth press to this continuing feature of settlement life, and aroused a degree of public sympathy for the man's plight. His efforts also created an enduring story of opposition to government authority which has become part of Nyungar folklore. ** In April 1928 a sixty year old Aboriginal, Peter Jackson, took his seven children from Moore River and they managed to travel as far as Kellerberrin before they were captured by the police. They were placed in the town lock-up but managed to escape again, and it was several days before they were recaptured at South Trayning and returned to the settlement.

In June 1930 Jackson escaped once again with his children. They were captured after a few days and Jackson and his eldest son Freddy were taken to court to face charges under the 1905 Aborigines Act. In his defence Jackson stated that he simply wanted to bring up his children in his own way, away from the influence of white society. He was sentenced to five months' imprisonment in Fremantle Jail and his son Freddy received a one month sentence. On their release they

* It was not until 1937 that a kindergarten teacher was appointed at the settlement and a small kindergarten catering for thirty children was established there (Kaebrick, 1982).

**Peter Jackson's story is included in the play Kulark by the Aboriginal playwright, Jack Davis.
were to be returned to Moore River.²³ The Inspector of Aborigines, E.C. Mitchell, later commented that Jackson was left with the feeling that he needed "some law to protect him from the Chief Protector".²⁴

**Moore River Trainees**

The system of sending Moore River trainees out to employment was streamlined and until the Depression years Neville was able to report that the demand always exceeded the supply. In 1928 alone ninety trainees were sent out to employment.²⁵ Departmental controls over young women in domestic service were increased and Neville insisted that those seeking alternative positions should apply to his Department rather than to private employment agencies. Those who defied his orders were said to have been "hounded" by Neville and the police while the employment agents were "hauled over the coals" for interfering in what Neville considered to be the work of the Department. Mrs Landon of the London Agency told the Moseley Royal Commission in 1934 that the young women objected to being employed under permit and to the payment of their wages into Trust Accounts controlled by the Department. She maintained that Departmental control was adversely affecting their motivation to remain in employment and the quality of their work. She also accused the Department of refusing to provide the young women with details of their savings on request.²⁶

By 1934 the Department had 173 Trust Accounts containing a total balance of over £2,300 and a further £2,400 had been invested by the Department on behalf of Aborigines.²⁷ Neville maintained strict control over the way in which money from these accounts was spent. One Aboriginal man recalled going to Neville's office with a friend to try to get money from his friend's account so that they could
go out to have "a good time". Aware of Neville's attitudes to such a request, they told him that they needed the money for clothing. To their dismay, Neville took them to a second-hand clothing shop where he ordered the assistant to select a suit for the young man and promised to send a voucher to cover the cost on his return to his office.28

Initially, young women passing through Perth on their way to employment were boarded under Departmental supervision at the Maylands home of a Nurse Mulvale. However, in 1928 Neville began to push for the establishment of a home in Perth where young women could stay between jobs or while on holiday, and where trainees from the settlement could receive final instruction in domestic duties before being sent out to work. In 1930 the former headmaster's residence adjacent to the East Perth State School was purchased by the Department for use as a reception home for the young women and in April 1931 Mrs John Campbell, formerly Matron at Moore River, was appointed as Matron of what was now known as East Perth Girls Home.29 The young women were charged an exorbitant price of 25 shillings a week for a bed at the Home and one shilling for each meal taken there. Nevertheless, due to Neville's insistence that they stay there and the lack of alternative accommodation, the Home was well used and in its first year of operation 172 young women stayed there.30

**Perth: Prohibited Area**

During the late 1920s Neville became increasingly irritated by the presence of Aborigines in the Perth inner city area. During the Christmas holidays, the summer grape picking season and the Royal Show large numbers of Aborigines visited Perth and they could often be seen walking through Perth, purportedly not always in a sober
state. White City, an entertainment centre on the Perth Esplanade, was a favourite rendezvous. During the year it was also a regular meeting place for young women in domestic service in Perth and several young men, including a number of trainees from Moore River, were employed there (without the approval of the Department). Neville was angered at the presence of drunken Aborigines in the streets of Perth: he considered such behaviour to be a direct reflection on himself and the Department and, indeed, the white residents of Perth saw it as his responsibility to keep the Aborigines off the streets, in much the same way as the police did in the country towns. The presence of young trainees from Moore River at White City did not fit with Neville's view of "respectability" and he claimed that the young women were making "undesirable" associations there while the young men were being exploited by their employers. In addition, several of the young men had defied Neville by refusing to take positions offered to them by the Department.

In 1927, at Neville's instigation, the Perth city area was declared a prohibited area for Aborigines under the 1905 Aborigines Act, the first time that this provision was implemented in the south. Henceforth, only those Aborigines who were in legal employment in Perth, or down on holidays from a permanent job in the country, were to be allowed into the inner city area, and only then if they had a pass issued by the Department and on condition that they conducted themselves "properly". In 1925 the Inspector of Aborigines recommended that the prohibition be extended to include the centre of Fremantle as well. In 1928, perhaps at the insistence of the Ugly Men's Association,* which had recently taken over White City, the

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* The Ugly Men's Association was a charitable organisation established by returned soldiers.
Aborigines Act, 1905, Section 39.

IT is hereby notified that all the lands comprised in the area described below have now been proclaimed to be an area in which it shall be unlawful for Aborigines or Half-castes, not in lawful employment, to be or remain (in lieu of those published in Government Gazette of 27th November, 1905).

Proclamation of Prohibited Area issued under 1905 Aborigines Act
Police Department advised Neville that there was little reason for restricting the entry of Aborigines to the amusement centre. The Aborigines were respectable and well-behaved and the young men were valued employees. Simon Gentle was an expert rodeo rider who had collected several competition prizes and he was paid the same wages as other riders while Jimmy Gillespie and Jock Leyland boxed there regularly and often won purses of up to £5. Neville's reply was short and to the point:

I repeat that it is my desire that neither half-castes nor aborigines be permitted to frequent White City on any pretext whatsoever. It is simply debasing the natives and the contests lower the status of whites in their eyes. Fugilism invariably leads to the ruin of the black.

However, one year later the police were still only partially enforcing Neville's instructions. In their defence they told Neville that they could only restrict the entry of unemployed Aborigines and that only the management could remove employed Aborigines from the premises.

Conflict between Neville and the police over the presence of Aborigines in the streets of Perth continued during the 1930s and in 1934 he reminded the police that they were to rigidly enforce the prohibition. Some Aborigines objected strongly to this infringement of their liberty. In 1935 Robert Edgil, a professional boxer of Victoria Park, demanded to see the Officer-in-Charge of the Perth Police Station after a constable ordered him to leave the city. He told the police that he would take the matter up with the Department and, if necessary, with the press as he was "an Australian and was being victimised". The police informed Neville of the difficulties they were encountering in enforcing the prohibition,
adding that the Aborigines were "anxious to have the matter cleared up". Neville replied that any person of Aboriginal descent seen by the police in the city area was to be questioned and warned of the dangers of mixing with "low caste whites". Those who had no right to be in the city were to be ordered to leave immediately.32

Aborigines Outside Moore River Settlement

Elderly Aborigines today refer to the period dating from the late 1920s into the economic depression of the early 1930s as the "hard times". As seasonal and contract rural workers, Aborigines were the first to suffer from the effects of the decline in the rural economy during the late 1920s, culminating in the collapse of the rural economy in the early 1930s. The decline reflected trends in the local, national and international economies and international economic trends. The eastward expansion of the wheat belt had not proved as successful as the agricultural development programmes of the pre-war years: the costs of production and transportation were higher than anticipated and, due to their inexperience, many farmers encountered very real problems in developing their small blocks into economically viable farms. At the same time there was a steady decline in the price of wheat on the world market. From the mid 1920s the overseas loan market on which the state and Federal government relied for new capital also began to contract and this led to cut-backs in government expenditure. In the early 1930s all public works programmes in the state were drastically curtailed and the government withdrew its financial assistance to farmers. Instead the Federal government agreed to underwrite the cost of wheat delivered to railway sidings to the value of three shillings a bushell.33
These trends seriously affected the Aborigines' ability to earn a living. Tom Bennell set out from Brookton in 1927 to find a job and he recalls:

I packed my bluey and I went roaming, hitch-hiking, jump a train, just walk along. The Depression was starting to come in and I couldn't get a job. Gee, I was sorry I went. No work. No money. I went to Narrogin tried on the Shire Council. No, no money. I did a bit of gardening for a few days, eight bob a day and dinner. That was good money. That finished and I went to Wagin, Katanning. Nothing doing there. You had to bum your food. Go into a house and ask for a bit of tucker. And on you go.

Ironically, the growing plague of rabbits which was menacing crops in the south provided some relief for Aborigines unable to find regular employment. Rabbits brought around six pence a pair and were sold to buyers from town, who in turn sold them to outlets in Perth for domestic consumption. Rabbit meat formed a major part of the Aborigines' diet. Tom Bennell trapped along the Brookton Road and he recalls that he started off getting around fifty pairs a night. His best catch was "160 pairs and ten I shot with my rifle". He would set his traps in the afternoon, return to his camp for dinner and then go out again to check his traps and reset them:

Might get home ten, twelve o'clock at night, depends on how many rabbits I catch. Five o'clock next morning, harness my horse up and I'm gone. Get round the traps, finish by eight o'clock then back home, have breakfast. Then I'd lay off. The rabbit buyer'd come around to fetch 'em around about twelve o'clock. I'd have lunch, then I'd be ready again for work.

Some farmers allowed Aborigines to pick "dead wool" from sheep carcasses on their properties or to strip mallet bark (the restriction on this had been lifted) and the sale of these provided Aborigines
with a small additional income.

As during the pre-war years, the Aborigines' precarious economic situation was exacerbated by the continued increase in their population. Estimates from the Annual Reports of the Aborigines Department indicate that the population increased from 1,781 in 1921 to 2,422 in 1931, an overall increase of almost 75 per cent. Much of this population was concentrated in the Midlands, Avon and Great Southern districts of the wheat belt. During this period the Aborigines virtually outgrew the narrow employment niche still open to them while those who were able to find employment were obliged to support a large number of dependants. Most workers had large families of their own and families of up to ten and fourteen children were common. In addition, most families had mutual sharing obligations with others in their "run" and while this meant that those in economic difficulties could turn to their kin for support, thereby maintaining a degree of independence from the Department, this also placed a very great strain on wage earners in the community.

As early as 1927 Neville expressed concern at the difficulties facing families with babies and young children living in "primitive conditions" in the town camps and at the lack of education for their children. He was also convinced that many Aborigines in the south were suffering from malnutrition and was determined to do something to relieve their plight. From 1927 Neville began to push for the opening of a second settlement to accommodate people from the town camps in the south and to take in Aborigines formerly issued rations at the telegraph stations at Eucla, Eyre and Israelite Bay which were closed in 1926 and 1927 following the opening of a telegraph line along the Trans-Railway. Moore River was already filled to capacity and, in Neville's opinion, it was inadvisable to mix
Family Gathering, Kellerberrin Showground, early 1920s
Aborigines from the north and south together at the settlement. In 1928 he was considering several possible sites for a settlement (including the original site of Carrolup) and the matter was raised in Parliament during debate on the Estimates. However, despite support from a number of prominent people, including the MLA for Katanning, who was alarmed at the growing number of Aborigines camping near the town, Neville failed to convince the government of the need for the settlement. He did succeed in securing additional funding to improve the Department's ration scale. In the 1928 Estimates he requested an additional £1,800 to add a meat supplement to the ration issue and, although he was granted only half this amount, it was sufficient to provide for the addition of 2½ pounds of meat to the weekly ration scale. Meanwhile, Neville refused to take any action to improve conditions in the town camps, holding out instead for the opening of a settlement in the south. During the late 1920s the camps became increasingly overcrowded and over-used and living conditions deteriorated rapidly.

Missionary Work in the South

The situation of Aborigines in the Gnowangerup and Quairading districts was relieved by the work of missionaries from the Australian Aborigines Mission (renamed United Aborigines Mission in 1929). Following the closure of Carrolup in 1922, the AAM curtailed its mission work in the south and expanded its activities into other parts of the state, most notably with the establishment of the Mount Margaret Mission near Laverton in 1921. However, the difficulties experienced by Aborigines in the south during the late 1920s attracted the attention of a number of AAM missionaries and, with the encouragement of the mission authorities in Melbourne, they began to take
steps to set up small local missions in the town camps. Despite his misgivings about missionaries, Neville had little choice but to accept their presence and, initially, there was a degree of cooperation between the Department and the missionaries.

The procedure followed by the AAM in establishing missions was to seek out the "scattered camps of the native people", make contact with the people living there and teach them about Christianity. Then, with the approval and support of the camp residents, the missionaries would open a mission station at the camp. They also sought to enlist the "sympathy" and support of local white residents for their work. Their stated aim was the "salvation of the native people, and incidentally to improve their social and economic conditions". Missionaries in the field received no financial support from the mission authorities and were obliged to rely on public donations, government assistance and their own initiatives.41

The missions established by the AAM during the late 1920s bore little resemblance to earlier mission institutions in the south or to Neville's native settlements. As has been indicated, they were established in existing camps with the Aborigines' approval and support and, rather than forcing people to leave their homes, the missions acted as centres for Aborigines working and living in a particular district. They provided a range of services, albeit at a basic level, which were denied to Aborigines in the towns: schools, stores, churches and rudimentary hospitals providing basic medical care and a place for women to have their babies in privacy. The families lived in their own camps and no attempt was made to separate the children from their parents. The families could come and go as they wished. Generally the men went out working on contracts for local farmers, leaving their families behind in the protection
of the camp where their children could also attend school. Many of the women went into town during the day to do domestic work. The Aborigines remained in control of their lives and there was no imposed institutional structure: apart from their religious purpose the missionaries were simply there to provide assistance and direction as required. They usually lived some distance from the main camp and, due to their financial situation, their living conditions were frugal. As a result of these factors Aboriginal families found life there far more attractive than at the native settlements and many older Aborigines today still have fond memories of their associations with the missionaries.

The AAM missionaries began by establishing a small school at Gnowangerup reserve. This was due largely to the work of a couple affectionately known to local Aborigines as Brother and Sister Wright. Sister Wright had worked for a time as a nurse at Carrolup and she had been keen to establish a mission in the south since the closure of the settlement. She considered Gnowangerup a suitable site for a mission as it was centrally situated for Aborigines in the surrounding district and the area retained some traditional significance for local Aborigines. The first school consisted of a bush shed of sheets of iron and mallee bush with a blackboard made from the blackened base of an old tank and kerosene boxes, with tins as desks and seats.42 (The shelter was subsequently replaced by a galvanised iron hut supplied by the Department.) Starting with six children, the school grew rapidly and by 1927 attendance had increased to forty.* In 1926 a tent provided for Aboriginal patients at Gnowangerup

* In that year the following families had children enrolled at the school: Howard, Cunningham, Williams, Coyne, Loo, Penny, Wynne (A/423/1927).
Hospital was transferred to the reserve. Lancel Williams, who was attending the mission school at the time, recalls how in those days Aborigines

...weren't allowed into the hospital at Gnowangerup. First of all when Brother Wright first came they gave us a big sleep out, a big canvas tent on the camping ground. My sister had an abscess on the brain then, just behind the ear, and you know they had to have the operation in this tent. The doctor, he was a German bloke, and the Matron and two nurses done it.44

In the same year Brother Wright was appointed honorary protector of Aborigines for the Gnowangerup district and took over responsibility for issuing rations to Aborigines at the mission.

The mission population grew rapidly and by 1928 there were one hundred Aborigines living there on a regular basis. At the same time the camp was evolving into "a little town" with its own store, school, hospital and camps. Brother Wright purchased food wholesale in Perth for the mission store and was able to under-cut the prices of storekeepers in Gnowangerup. During the week the men would go off shearing, root picking, clearing, grubbing or harvesting, depending on the season and the availability of work. They would set off

...on push bikes. Some had a horse and cart but the Nyungars didn't have any place to keep their horses. Bikes were the main transport to go out to work or for food. They could hire a bike from Brother Wright. If the job was a long way out the Boss'd come and pick them up, take them to the farms, get them rations and when they needed stores.45

When the men came in from work on the weekends Brother Wright opened the store, cashed their cheques, and the men bought stores for their families. He also purchased kangaroo skins from the Aborigines after
they had been out hunting, bought dead wool, and helped the men to find work when possible. If there was no work available locally he would find them work at the mission, chopping wood, or carting goods to the store. He paid the men in government rations and this prompted a strong reprimand from Neville. Despite his own policies at Moore River settlement, Neville informed the men that they were under no obligation to work to receive rations. The women worked in Gnawangerup

...washing clothes for the white ladies...about 5/- for a whole days washing, hanging it out, fetching it. Washing by hand...Nyungar women did a lot of work like that for the white people there in Gnawangerup for little wages. They used to scrub the floors, polish floors, do the washing, ironing.

While their men were out working the women bore full responsibility for caring for the children and running their camps. These usually consisted of little more than tents, mia mias or makeshift huts which were arranged in family groupings over the reserve ground.

Former mission residents recall that the missionaries did not interfere unduly in the life of the camp. They encouraged the people to be baptised, married and buried according to Christian rites and Brother Wright was strongly opposed to any gambling in the camp. Lancel Williams recalls that the people were "frightened of Brother Wright with gambling. He didn't like to see one bloke robbing another. When the Nyungars see him coming they'd be off". However, he was said to have "turned a blind eye to drinking as long as you didn't kick up a fuss", and the Aborigines, perhaps without the missionaries' knowledge, maintained such traditional practices as the use of traditional personal names, moiety membership, and healing techniques. In 1933 Aborigines from Gnawangerup performed some of
their traditional dances at a carnival held in Perth by the Nedlands sub-branch of the Returned Soldiers League.

Despite their efforts, the missionaries failed to gain the support of the Gnowangerup townspeople for their work. From 1927 the Department received complaints about the mission from the Gnowangerup Agricultural Society, the Roads Board and local representatives of the Department of Health objecting to the large number of Aborigines at the mission and the unsanitary conditions in which they were living. Neville visited the mission reserve during the year and agreed to fund the erection of sanitary facilities, the sealing of the reserve dam to prevent seepage from the adjacent rubbish and sanitary depots and the clearing of rubbish from the camps. However, this did little to improve relations in the town and as numbers of Aborigines camped at the mission increased during the Depression years tensions between the mission and the town increased accordingly. Relations between the mission and the town police were also strained: Brother Wright was adamant that the police had no role at the mission and he only allowed them to visit the mission when he wanted them to.

From 1928 the AAM extended its operations into other areas in the south. In addition to their work at Gnowangerup, the Wrights visited camps in the surrounding district, travelling as far as Albany in their old Ford truck. They established a preaching station at Tambellup and in 1928 a branch of the mission was opened at Geeralying (between Narrogin and Williams) where almost two hundred Aborigines were camped on a block of land reserved for the use of travellers and stock. The camp was adjacent to land owned by the Coucher family who were regular employers of men from the camp and also allowed the people to draw water from a well on their land. The major
families at the camps were the Ugles, Narkles, Harts and Dinashe. The Ugles tell the story that they came to move from the Beverley district to Geeralying after they were trucked down one year to shear for the Couchers. The Ugle men were "gun shearers" and the Couchers were so pleased with their work that they refused to drive them back to Beverley and so they stayed on in the district. George O. Johnston was appointed Assistant Missionary at Geeralying and in 1929 he began to hold classes for the children one week out of four. He was assisted by two women missionaries who had already worked with the Wrights at Gnowangerup. However, in the following year the Inspector of Aborigines, E.C. Mitchell, reported that the missionaries had abandoned their efforts. No reason was given for this. Mitchell recommended that the Anglican Minister from Narrogin, Reverend Boxall, take over mission work at the camp. He believed that the involvement of an established church figure was preferable to that of "itinerant missionaries' as he had more hope of combatting the "selfish, often unwarranted, groundless opposition of his white fellow citizens to any attempt to help the aborigines". As it happened, Boxall had little impact on his white parishioners. In 1930 he failed in his attempts to enrol the local Aboriginal children at the Geeralying State School. Following the closure of the school in 1936 he requested that it be converted for the use of children from the Geeralying camp and the nearby town of Narrogin. However, the Department refused to support the project and Boxall was to experience similar difficulties during the Depression years in his attempts to improve conditions for Aborigines in the Narrogin town camp.

In 1929 two women AAM missionaries, Misses Belshaw and McRidge, became concerned at the lack of education for Aboriginal children
in the Quairading district and began to look into the possibility of establishing a mission in the district. A number of local Aboriginal families supported them and in January 1930 Fred and Charlie Winmar suggested a site some distance from Quairading where there was a good water supply and a vacant school building. However, the Education Department refused to hand over the building and the Bruce Rock Road Board strongly opposed the establishment of an Aboriginal mission within its boundaries. Despite objections from the Quairading Roads Board, the missionaries eventually decided on a site near the Badjaling siding, not far from the town of Quairading, where a number of Aboriginal families were already camped on Aboriginal reserve land. There was a government well adjacent to the reserve and the men worked for local farmers and hunted for kangaroos in the surrounding district. In 1930 the two missionaries took up residence in a vacant settlers' house at Badjaling siding.51

The mission developed along similar lines to the one at Gnowangerup. The missionaries started with a small bough shed school and within a few years there were up to forty children attending. Classes were later moved to a small hall which also served as a church and a small "hospital" was also erected. Norman Yarran, who lived at the mission during the 1930s, recalls that increasing numbers of Aborigines moved there because "work was getting scarce" and they wanted to send their children to school. The families* all camped in

...a different place. Like it's in the one square but somebody over here and somebody over there. But they got little tin places made. Kerosene tins, used to go to the dump...cut up the tins and make a sort of tin place.52

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* Eaton (1979) provides the following list of Badjaling residents: Thomas and Mary Kickett; the widow of John Kickett; Lionel Yarran; Ernie and Janie Jacobs and their family; William and Fanny Garlett and family; Granny Mary Narriel; Jack McKay and Liza and Henry Narriel; Charles and Minnie Winmar and family; Tom and Mary Mead and family; Eva and Morton Hansen and family; Grannie Jessie Blurton.
After Sunday service at Badaling Mission, 1930s.
The Aborigines did virtually all of the maintenance work at the mission, seeing to the upkeep of the amenities and the regular clearing out of the soak from which they drew much of their water for drinking and domestic use. Lionel Yarran, an Aboriginal man of imposing physical appearance who had worked in the Kellerberrin and Quairading district for many years, acted as spokesman for the Badjaling Aborigines rather than the women missionaries. The missionaries were not appointed as local protectors of Aborigines and unemployed Aborigines from the mission continued to draw rations from the police in Quairading.

The cooperation which initially existed between Neville and the missionaries quickly broke down due to a basic conflict in interests and outlook. Neville found that the missionaries were increasingly placing themselves between him and the people he considered to be his "charges" and he later accused them of portraying him as a "bogeyman" to the Aborigines. Aborigines from the Gnowangerup mission recall that the Wrights stood up to Neville: they "could never give way to him. They wouldn't let their people go, they'd always stick up for the people". Neville was also convinced that the missionaries were encouraging Aboriginal couples to marry with the deliberate intention of breaking his control over the children. The Chief Protector's rights of guardianship over the children only exceeded those of the parents when they were not legally married, and marriage provided an effective and legal way of breaking his control. While the missionaries did have their own religious reasons for encouraging the couples to enter into legal marriages, there was probably some truth in Neville's assumptions. The missionaries were opposed to the splitting up of the families which they saw as the basic building blocks for their work. Comments by Neville during this period suggest
that the parents themselves often entered into legal marriages with the deliberate intention of maintaining their control over their own children. Meanwhile, the children had their own ways of avoiding detection by Neville and his officers. Lancel Williams has vivid memories of Neville coming to take children from the Gnowangerup mission

...if he [could] get 'em. They wouldn't be there for him to pick up. We knew when he was coming down. All us kids we'd be out of it, we'd all be there go out there in the bush. We used to get a tip off before he came down. We were frightened but once we were in the bush we didn't care, we was right.  

While Neville saw the southern missions as a stop-gap measure to alleviate the situation of Aborigines until such time as a second settlement could be opened, the missionaries were equally determined that they were there to stay. After the AAM's experiences at Katanning and Carrolup they were well aware that Departmental involvement through the establishment of a settlement would virtually force them out of their work with the Aborigines and besides, they were convinced that their style of mission was more suited to the needs of the Aborigines than the settlements. Brother Wright told the Moseley Royal Commission in 1934 that when Aborigines were permitted to remain in their district and in touch with their regular employers they were able to retain their independence and "that spirit" which enabled them to become "worthy citizens". He suggested that rather than re-opening a settlement, the Department should cooperate with the missionaries in building up Badjaling and Gnowangerup. Such opinions obviously brought Wright and his colleagues into direct conflict with Neville. Representatives of the United Aborigines Mission (UAM) were to play a vital role in the controversies of the
early 1930s and they were vociferous in their attacks on Neville and his policies and administration of the Department.

There was little that Neville could do to control the missionaries: he had little power over missions under the 1905 Aborigines Act and as the AAM missions were not subsidised by his Department he could not threaten them with financial sanctions. Neville was also experiencing difficulty in controlling missionaries in other parts of the state and in 1929 he recommended the introduction of unprecedented Departmental controls over missions. His recommendations included: the introduction of compulsory permits to be issued by the Minister to missionaries before they were permitted to work with Aborigines and measures to greatly increase the supervisory role of the Department. The missionaries would be required by law to forward detailed annual reports to the Department and to record all names of mission residents, and the Chief Protector or any authorised Departmental officer would have the right to inspect the missions at any time. In addition, all marriages of mission Aborigines would require the prior permission of the Chief Protector. He would also have the power to direct missions to accept certain Aborigines and to instruct missionaries to send Aborigines out to work or to be "otherwise disposed of".56 Although Neville succeeded in having a clause allowing the Governor to make regulations for the control of missions included in the amending Bill placed before Parliament in 1929, it was not until 1938 that these regulations were gazetted.57*

* The regulations provoked an outcry from missionary and church authorities. They made angry statements to the press and the Minister in Charge of the Department, W.H. Kitson, and Neville were attacked in Parliament. The regulations were subsequently withdrawn (Biskup, 1973).
The Onnalmeri Massacre and Changing Trends in the South

In January 1927 reports of a massacre of Aborigines by police and settlers in the East Kimberley hit the headlines in the Perth press. These reports and the subsequent controversy precipitated a brief burst of public interest in the wider aspects of the Aboriginal "problem". This had implications for Aborigines in the south: it provided them with an opportunity to draw the attention of the public to their plight and at the same time it provided Neville with a powerful argument to persuade the Collier Labor government to introduce legislation to amend the 1905 Aborigines Act.

In May 1926 a posse of police and settlers rode out to Marndoc Reserve in the East Kimberley where they massacred at least eleven members of the Anderda tribe and then burnt their bodies. This was in retaliation for the killing of F.W. Hay, part-owner of Nulla Nulla Station adjacent to the reserve, who was said to have been killed after he insulted and chastised a senior Anderda man named Lumbia. It was not until January 1927, after persistent efforts by Reverend E.R.B. Gribble of the Forrest River Mission* and the discovery of charred human remains at Marndoc that the government appointed a Royal Commission, under Stipendiary Magistrate G.T. Wood, to enquire into the massacre. The Commissioner was frustrated in his efforts to collect evidence in the Wyndham district by lack of cooperation from local white settlers who were entirely sympathetic to the posse. They went so far as to circulate a drawing of Aboriginal trackers hanging from a gallows to prevent the trackers from giving evidence.

* Gribble was the son of Reverend J.B. Gribble who had levelled accusations of cruelty against settlers in the Gascoyne district in 1886. He is said to have inspired the novel To The Islands by the Australian novelist, Randolph Stow.
to the Royal Commission. In Perth, Gribble and the Aborigines Department's Inspector of Aborigines, E.C. Mitchell, who had investigated reports of the massacre during 1926 on behalf of the Department, provided the bulk of the evidence. Neville also gave evidence in which he criticised the inadequate supervision of Aboriginal trackers by the police and drew attention to earlier complaints he had made concerning killing of Aborigines in the Kimberleys by police and Aboriginal trackers. He extended his criticisms to the system of using police as protectors of Aborigines in the north generally, although he hastened to add that it was the system he objected to, not the "officers operating it", and recommended that offences committed by Aborigines against their own traditional laws should be dealt with by the Aborigines Department as Aborigines were "afraid" of the police. 59

In his Report the Commissioner stated that the Aborigines had died while in the custody of the police and settlers but that insufficient evidence had been presented to the Commission to justify prosecutions for murder. Nevertheless, two police constables were subsequently arrested and charged with murder. They were acquitted of the charges on the grounds of insufficient evidence and the only action taken against them was to move them to another district. 60 In the meantime the Aboriginal man, Lumbia, had been found guilty of the murder of Hay and sent to Fremantle Prison. 61

Sir Paul Hasluck (1977), recalls that he thought the massacre a "horrifying and exceptional occurrence in a remote region" and that the general public was more concerned about "defending the alleged perpetrators from what was regarded as the fanaticism of a missionary than about the death of the aborigines". 62 Nevertheless, some concern was expressed for the Aborigines. A public meeting
was held in Perth and a spate of letters to the editor appeared in the Perth press, demanding a range of measures from stern action against the pastoralists to appeals for regular medical inspection of all Aborigines. In January 1927 the Daily News called for the complete segregation of Aborigines of the full descent in the north to protect them from the "contaminating" influences of white civilisation and to "speed up the development of the north, since all the aborigines would have to be replaced by white workers".63 Although Hasluck (1977) states that "few people related this outrage in a remote place to the conditions of detribalized aborigines in another place",64 the climate of public interest nevertheless provided Aborigines in the south with an opening to draw public attention to their plight.

The Nativc Union

The emergence of organised Aboriginal protest in southern Australia was a feature of the late 1920s and the 1930s. The first Aboriginal protest group, the Australian Aborigines Progressive Association, was formed in Sydney in 1924 under the leadership of Fred Maynard. In 1926 William Harris, a part-Aboriginal farmer from the Morowa district, founded the Native Union in Western Australia. In 1932 William Cooper, a sixty-six year old Aboriginal originally from Coomeragunga Station in eastern Victoria, established the Australian Aborigines League in Melbourne. In 1933 he organised a petition to King George V calling for improved conditions for Aborigines and Aboriginal representation in Parliament.* William

* Cooper approached various departments concerned with the administration of Aboriginal affairs in the states and the Commonwealth Territories seeking their approval and assistance in his endeavours to bring the petition to the attention of Aborigines and part-Aborigines in their areas. Queensland refused to cooperate with him while Neville agreed to allow him to circulate the petition in Western Australia but forecast that little would come of it due to the enormous distances between the Aboriginal communities in the
Ferguson, a part-Aboriginal shearer and unionist, formed the Aborigines Progress Association (APA) in Dubbo, New South Wales in 1937. In the same year Ferguson and John Patten, also a leader of the APA, set about organising a Day of Mourning to be celebrated on 26 January 1938, also the 150th Anniversary of the landing of the First Fleet at Sydney Cove. A week before the Day of Mourning they published a manifesto in which they commemorated the "150 years of misery and degradation imposed upon the original inhabitants by the white invaders of this country" and demanded citizenship rights, justice, and freedom from the constraints of the special discriminatory legislation under which they were forced to live. Essentially the aims of these various protest groups was "citizenship and assimilation into the wider community" and Broome (1982) states that they "largely accepted absorption as their fate and some even welcomed it". They also believed in the value of democratic forms of political protest: letters to newspapers, representations to Ministers of the Crown and other influential figures, pressure group action, the vote and, in the case of William Ferguson, union action.

William Harris, the driving force behind the formation of the Native Union in Western Australia, had been actively fighting for the rights of Aboriginal people since the early years of the century. He was of Aboriginal descent, the son of a shepherd from the Williams district, Tom Harris, and an Aboriginal woman named Madeleine. Born around 1860, he was educated at the Swan Native and Half Caste Home (SNHC Home) in Perth and later at the Swan Boys Orphanage. After leaving the orphanage, Harris worked with his brother Edward Harris

* (contd. from overleaf)

state and the high levels of illiteracy amongst the state's Aboriginal population (A/368/1933).
on stations in the northwest and subsequently purchased a small property of his own near Morawa. At the turn of the century he went prospecting in the Leonora district where he was said to have discovered the district of Harrisville (which was named after him) and, together with other members of his family, he established a small goldmine there.66

Harris was a man of strong principles and humanity. Although little affected by the discriminatory laws himself, he, like William Ferguson in New South Wales, took up the fight on behalf of those with less opportunity to do so. In contrast to Neville, he was strongly opposed to legislative controls over part-Aborigines. Although he could have easily qualified for exemption from the 1905 Act, he and his family had taken a strong stand against the notion of exemptions which, in their view, only served to reinforce the status of part-Aborigines as second-class citizens. This view was strongly expressed by Harris's nephew, Norman Harris, in a letter to Jim Bassett, a part-Aboriginal farmer of the Perenjori district in 1928:

No Jim, I hope and trust that you have not got one of those dog collers. I can safely say that none of the Harriss got one yet, and not likely to get one.67

Like his counterparts in the eastern states, William Harris believed firmly in democratic forms of protest and it was the failure of a government proposal in 1925 to extend the state franchise (and thereby the Federal franchise as well) to part-Aborigines which prompted him to take the first steps toward the formation of the Native Union.

The proposed extension of the franchise was one of several more general measures contained in the 1925 Electoral Act Amendment Bill intended to bring state electoral legislation in line with Common-
wealth legislation pending the proposed amalgamation of the state and Commonwealth electoral rolls. In introducing the Bill to the Legislative Assembly, J.C. Willcock, the Minister for Justice, stated that there were many part-Aborigines in the state who paid rates and taxes and it was "only right that they should be allowed to be enrolled". 68 However, the Leader of the Opposition, Sir James Mitchell, opposed the measure on the grounds that most part-Aborigines lived like "Aboriginal natives" and were to be found mainly in sparsely settled areas of the state. He was presumably concerned that they would be able to exercise an undue and, in his opinion, unwarranted influence over voting patterns in these areas. There was general support for Mitchell from both the Opposition and the government benches and it was a member of the Labor government, George "Mulga" Taylor (Mount Margaret) who moved successfully that the measure be dropped from the Bill.

The failure of the amendment and the insulting comments made during the debate prompted Harris to write an angry letter to the West Australian. He stated that Mitchell's remarks were misleading: most part-Aborigines were living "exactly the same as whites when possible - by hard work" and many of them had fought in the "Great War" only to be refused the vote and entrance to hotels "even to take shelter from a storm". The part-Aborigines were not aliens but were living in "their own land". Moreover, he continued, some scientists held that the Aboriginal race was the "root stock of the Aryan branch of the human family" and that "given a chance they were mentally, morally, and physically the equals of any other kind of human being". Harris also drew his readers' attention to the "persistent cruelty and injustice" perpetrated against "the unfortunate half-caste" and
described the 1905 Aborigines Act as a "foul blot on the State of Western Australia" and "a disgrace to those formulating such Acts".69 *

In November 1926, in response to reports of the Onmalmeri massacre, Harris wrote to the Sunday Times condemning the "cruel and lawless state" in which Aborigines in Western Australia were forced to live. He asked: "What law or justice can there be for people who are robbed and shot down?" and stated that "heaps of human bones mixed with cartridge shells' in different parts of the state "seemed sufficient evidence" that Aborigines had been shot down. He asserted that the situation of Aborigines in the state had gone from "bad to worse" following the inauguration of responsible government and had now become "intolerable". He also took the opportunity to draw attention to the situation of Aborigines in the south who could be rounded up and sent to Moore River and forced to live with "murderers and other offenders" while they were "terrorized" by Aboriginal police who strutted around "in all the glory of a uniform, handcuffs and keys". He also announced that:

The educated aborigines and half-castes [were] about to form a protective union. As British subjects they claim, and mean to have, the protection of the same laws that govern white men, not to be persecuted by the Aborigines Department and its officials.**

The kinds of oppression and interference that Harris was objecting to were clearly set out in a letter from Norman Harris to James Bassett:

* A copy of this letter is contained in Appendix III.
** The full text of this letter is contained in Appendix III.
He is not allowed in a pub, not to have a gun, not to camp on reserves, because squatters stock are there, he is not to have guns near stock. He is not to grow grapes because he may get drunk. They bar him in football and cricket, must not be in town too long after dark. All police are in the bush a sort of protector. ...I have never heard of them protecting a native yet. A native can't leave this state without getting the permission of the Protector (A.O. Neville) a rotten B. The white police can do just as they like. The native is a prisoner wherever he is. He can be brought from any part of the State put in a compound such as Mogumber, a rotten place for all sorts....Those children are being brought up amongst all the black cut-throats...from all parts of the country. They say they are trying to send them out into the world to do good for themselves. How can they when the Aborigines Act is on them. Yet there are hundreds of half-castes send their children there for training and schooling think they are doing good if they only stop and think....Then again if they dont send them the Police come along and send them to Mogumber or the Prison.

The common experience of repression and discrimination and the incarceration of Aborigines from various parts of the south in the settlements had served to expand networks within the Aboriginal population in the south and they provided a ready line of communication and support for Harris. Letters were sent out to Aborigines in various parts of the south by the Harris family and William Harris visited Aboriginal groups in several districts, drumming up support and requesting donations for his campaign. News of his activities spread quickly along the "bush telegraph" and in June 1927 he told the press that the Union had gained considerable backing from part-

* Norman Harris' letters were located in the records of the Aborigines Department. It is not known how they came into the Department's possession. In another letter to Bassett, Harris expressed concern at the possibility of such an eventuality and warned Bassett to either burn the letter or to return it to him (A/94/1928).
Aborigines in the south. During the year he also turned to organising a deputation of Aborigines and part-Aborigines to the Premier and he called for donations to enable him to employ a solicitor to advise the deputation.

On 9 March 1928 William Harris led the first deputation of Aborigines to wait on a Western Australian Premier into Premier Collier's office in the Treasury Building in Perth. The seven men in the deputation came from various families and localities. This was the first instance of an organised, regionally based protest in the south. Although the men came from a wide range of backgrounds, they had one factor in common: they, or members of their families, had on previous occasions spoken out on behalf of their families or local Aboriginal communities against the oppression of the Department and the discriminatory actions of white organisations in rural areas. William Harris' brother, Edward Harris of Toodyay, was educated at the SNHC Home and he first came into conflict with the Department in 1911 when, following the death of his first wife, his children were sent to the Dulhi Gunyah Orphanage by the Department without his permission. When he demanded that they be returned to him the Department reluctantly allowed one of his sons to rejoin him, however, his other son died at the orphanage and his two daughters were later transferred to Carrolup and thence to Moore River. Norman Harris lived at Morawa with his uncle and he had played an important role in the organisation of the deputation. Wilfred Morrison was said to be of full Aboriginal descent and came from Gnowangerup. He had lived at Carrolup for some time but had remained in the district when Carrolup residents were transferred to Moore River. In 1923 he put his name to a letter sent by Aborigines from the Gnowangerup district to the Department complaining about their
CULTURED ABORIGINES CALL ON BIG FELLA COLLIER.

A UNIQUE DEPUTATION of Western Australian aboriginals, well spoken and in some cases well educated and well read men waited on the Premier yesterday morning and received from him sympathetic consideration for the remeving of a number of disabilities under which they labor. The party comprises:—Top: The spokesmen. Edward Harris (Toodyay) and William H., (North-West). Lower: left to right: Wilfred Moore (Kalamunda), A. Kirkett (York), Norman Harris (Morowa), Edward Jacobs (Quairading), and W. Rodney (Guildford).

Members of the Aboriginal Deputation to Premier Collier in 1928
treatment by local police and farmers. Edward Jacobs had been a farmer in the Quairading district and between 1914 and 1915 had fought in vain to have his children enrolled at the Quairading State School. Arthur Kickett was from the same district and his family had a long history of fighting for their rights, beginning in 1904 when they requested an inquiry into the death of William Noongale Kickett, and continuing until the First World War when John Kickett waged a campaign to have his children admitted to the Quairading State School. William Bodney, the seventh member of the deputation, was not in fact Aboriginal but was of part-African and European descent. He grew up at the SNHC Home and, on leaving the mission, had continued to live and associate with Aborigines. During the early 1920s he lived at the Moora reserve, and he wrote several letters to the Department drawing attention to the treatment meted out to local Aborigines by the doctor and the Moora Hospital and presenting their case against the proposal to move the reserve out of Moora.

The deputation focussed their objections to the Premier on the inclusion of Aborigines and part-Aborigines "in touch with civilisation" under the 1905 Aborigines Act and to the control of the Aborigines Department. "We want to live up to the white man's standard", Harris told Collier, "but in order to be able to do so we should be exempted from the Aborigines Act, and allowed to live our lives in our own way". They objected in particular to the denial of drinking rights to "civilised" Aborigines and part-Aborigines, the implementation of the special employment provisions in the south of Roebourne, the declaration of Perth as a prohibited area, the prohibition on firearms for Aborigines and part-Aborigines, and the Department's interference in the liberty of individuals by forcing them to live at Moore River. They condemned conditions at the
settlement claiming that it was little more than "a prison" where the people were forced to mix with hardened characters from all over the state and where they were harshly disciplined by Kimberley "cut-throats". In relation to tribal people in the north, they recommended that they should be granted large inviolate reserves where they could live in their natural state, free from the threat of being driven off their land by pastoralists taking up grazing pasture for their stock. Neville and the police were also strongly criticised. Neville was described as one of the "worst enemies of the aborigines": Aborigines had "no time for the Chief Protector and were afraid of him". The police and Aboriginal trackers were "the terror of the natives...[they] run for their lives for when they see a policeman"; most trackers were "gaol birds" and when the Aborigines saw a "black policeman" they ran "twice as fast".73*

Premier Collier agreed to look into the matter and requested a report from Neville. Not surprisingly, the Chief Protector dismissed the objections raised by the deputation and set out to personally discredit the members of the deputation. His tactics have been repeated on innumerable occasions by government authorities intent on challenging the legitimacy of protests by Aboriginal people. In addition to dredging examples of personal misdemeanours by certain members of the deputation from the Department's files, Neville asserted that they knew little about the conditions of Aborigines in the state and that they were unfamiliar with the workings of the Department. He also maintained that they had no authority to speak on behalf of Aborigines (conveniently overlooking the fact that most of their protests related to the situation of

* A full list of the objections and recommendations of the deputation is contained in Appendix III.
their own people in the south) and that the views expressed by the
deputation were "diametrically opposed" to those of the "majority
of natives". Neville stated that William Harris had been reared
as "a white man" and the Aborigines regarded him as such, while Norman
Harris did not come under the control of the Department and therefore
should not "interfere" in its affairs. Neville added that "men like
Harris [did] not improve the position of the natives". The others
were simply voicing personal grievances against the Department.
Rather than reducing controls over Aborigines and part-Aborigines,
Neville concluded, the government should increase the powers of the
Department to provide further "protection" and to "see that justice
[was] done". On the basis of Neville's report, Collier simply
shelved the matter. In October 1925 the Honorary Minister, William
Kitson, inspected the Moore River settlement and he later told
journalists in Perth that the Department had "nothing to be ashamed
of" and it was

...obvious to anyone visiting the place that
the inmates were perfectly happy, and it
would be hard to find anywhere such a number
of bright and happy children as were to be
seen attending the school at the settlement.75

However, the West Australian carried an editorial supporting
the deputation's plea for exclusion from the Aborigines Act and
recommending that Aborigines who wished to become "useful members
of the Australian Commonwealth" should have the right to "education,
moral and intellectual, and employment under decent conditions".
It further stated that the demise of the Aboriginal race and their
assumed intellectual inferiority could no longer be taken for granted
after recent disclosures that Aborigines were "capable of intellectual
and moral education" and that "given favourable opportunities" they
could increase in numbers. 76

No positive changes came from the deputation and the unity which it achieved quickly disintegrated. No more was heard of the Native Union.* William Harris, the driving force behind the movement, died in 1931. Nevertheless the deputation had created a powerful precedent, and during the 1934 Moseley Royal Commission into the condition of Aborigines in the state, a number of Aborigines from the south came forward to present oral or written evidence to the Commissioner.

1929 Aborigines Act Amendment Bill

The events surrounding the Onmalmeri massacre and the 1927 Woods Royal Commission provided Neville with the opportunity to press home his demands for legislative reforms. As has been indicated, Neville first called for amendments to the 1905 Aborigines Act in 1915. From that time he had recommended the introduction of legislation to provide for: a minimum wage for Aboriginal workers in the pastoral industry, greater control over earnings and property of Aborigines, increased protection for Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal women from exploitation by non-Aboriginal men, the power to force Aborigines to undergo medical examination and treatment, and better regulation of the use of firearms by Aborigines. From the mid 1920s he sought the introduction of amendments to greatly increase Departmental

* In 1970 there was a brief attempt to resurrect the idea of the Native Union and the Native Union Newsletter was circulated amongst Aborigines in Perth and some of the southern districts. It drew inspiration from the original work of William Harris, however its aims were considerably more radical. The January edition of the Newsletter (which may have been the only edition) contained a detailed outline of Harris' work and the aims of the 1928 deputation along with an account of a contemporary case involving Aborigines and police and a small section urging Aborigines to register to vote. However, the Newsletter went on to reject the policy of integration, to demand land rights and to support the concept of Black Power (Native Union Newsletter, 1970).
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
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<td>1920</td>
<td>1,656</td>
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<td>1922</td>
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<td>1923</td>
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<td>1924</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>2,807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
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</tbody>
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N.B. No figures available for 1921
controls over part-Aborigines, to further centralise control of Aboriginal affairs in the hands of his Department, and to relieve the Department of its financial difficulties.

Neville was alarmed at the continuing rapid increase in the part-Aboriginal population in the south. He claimed that there were only fifty part-Aborigines in the area between Perth and Albany in 1905; by 1930 their numbers had increased to 2,486. Meanwhile, the overall part-Aboriginal population in the state had grown from 2,084 in 1921 to 3,501 in 1931 and at this rate Neville predicted that it could reach ten thousand by the end of the 1930s.77 As has been indicated, many Aborigines in the south were experiencing difficulty in finding employment during the late 1920s and many were living in deplorable conditions in the town camps. Their children were growing up outside the influence of white society and Neville drew public attention to his conviction that without "effective supervision" there was a danger that in the future part-Aborigines would "constitute a menace to the community" and "a social blot".78 "Effective supervision" meant bringing people under the rigid control of his Department. Neville was particularly concerned at the growing numbers of part-Aboriginal children of European appearance growing up in Aboriginal camps and he was adamant that they should be removed from their Aboriginal background and be trained in Departmental institutions to become members of the wider community.

Due to the complex racial background of the Aboriginal population in the south, there were in fact many part-Aborigines in the area in the late 1920s who did not come under the legal classifications of the 1905 Act, and who therefore were legally outside the control of the Department. In addition, due to the
structure of the 1905 Act, many of those part-Aborigines who did in fact come under the Act were only subject to certain of its provisions. As was indicated in Chapter Two, under the 1905 Act, persons of the full descent and those part-Aborigines with one Aboriginal parent on either side who lived and associated with Aborigines were to be deemed "Aboriginal natives" within the meaning of the Act and were to come under the full force of the law. Those persons with an Aboriginal mother and an other than Aboriginal father, and who lived apart from Aborigines were to be deemed "half-castes" and they only came under the provisions of the Act pertaining to the legal guardianship of children, the management of their property by the Chief Protector, the location of their camps, entry to prohibited areas, the supply of alcohol, and the recovery of their wages by local protectors. In addition, all female "half-castes" and male "half-castes" to the age of fourteen were included under all the provisions pertaining to employment. Several legal rulings had served to exclude a range of persons of Aboriginal descent from the provisions of the Act altogether. In 1919 the Carnarvon Court ruled that persons with "half-caste" parents on both sides did not come within the meaning of the Act and a ruling by the Crown Solicitor exempted all "quadroons" over the age of sixteen from the Act. 79 This effectively excluded a large range of part-Aborigines in the south from the control of the Department.

There were apparently a number of such persons in the south who were aware of their position in relation to the 1905 Act and Neville complained angrily in his Annual Reports during the late 1920s of their "defiance of departmental control". Less knowledgeable part-Aborigines and those who, due to their tender age or economic situation, had no choice in the matter, were dealt with by the Depart-
ment as if they legally came under the 1905 Act. While this had been evident in earlier administrative practice, during the late 1920s the Department increasingly exceeded its legal powers in dealing with part-Aborigines in the south. This was particularly the case in the removal of part-Aborigines to Moore River settlement: legally the Department had the power to send only those persons deemed "Aboriginal natives" under the 1905 Act to the settlements. However, a wide range of persons who fell outside this category were sent in to Moore River and detained there against their will. While Neville was apparently unconcerned at the possibility of legal or political action, he was nevertheless angered at the defiance of his orders by part-Aborigines and he was also aware of the possible impediments that the Act could create to prevent his plans for the removal of part-Aborigines in the south to settlements. He therefore recommended to his Minister that virtually all persons of Aboriginal descent be brought under the provisions of the Act and that all such persons be made subject to the full force of the Act. As has been indicated, Neville was also irate at the erosion of his powers over Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children through the growing incidence of legal marriages amongst part-Aborigines in the south and he was equally determined to bring these children under his legal guardianship as well.

As has been indicated, Neville also recommended the introduction of strict regulations to the 1905 Act to bring all missions under the direct supervision and control of the Department. At the same time he renewed his call for greater powers over the earnings and property of Aborigines, hoping in this way to increase the revenue of the Department. As in 1919, he recommended the introduction of the system followed in Queensland, where Aboriginal workers were paid
a minimum wage set under Arbitration Awards, part of which they were obliged to pay into a providential fund administered by the Department for the general benefit of all Aborigines in the state. Neville was also determined to subvert a ruling by the Crown Solicitor in 1928 that Aboriginal employees were to be deemed workers under the meaning of the Workers' Compensation Act. He was of the opinion that Aborigines were incapable of handling the large sums of money which they could conceivably be granted under its provisions, and he approached the Department of Labour to gain the support of its Minister to subvert the ruling. The Minister, Alexander McCallum, supported Neville. He was convinced that

...Parliament never intended that the schedules set out for compensation in that Act should apply to Aborigines. To seriously contend that the full provisions of the Act should apply equally with our own people appears to me to be too stupid to occupy a moment's consideration.

Neville advocated instead the introduction of the procedure followed in Queensland whereby all Aborigines were defined as workers under the Workers' Compensation Act and the Chief Protector acted as their agent; any compensation due to them was payable to him to be used for the general benefit of Aborigines. Alternatively he recommended that employers be obliged by law to pay for medical expenses incurred by Aboriginal workers on the job (under the 1905 Act this was only obligatory in the case of Aborigines employed under agreement), thereby relieving the Department of this expense. 81

Previous governments had shown little sympathy for Neville's demands for amendments to the 1905 Act. However, following the controversy over the Onbalmeri massacre, the Collier Labor government, anxious to give the impression of "doing something", agreed to
consider amendments to the Act and in 1928 Neville was given permission to commence work on an amending Bill. In October 1929 a Bill embodying most of Neville's recommendations was placed before the Legislative Council as a non-party measure. In introducing the Bill the Honorary Minister, William Kitson, stated that its major aim was to give the Aborigines Department the necessary powers to deal effectively with the growing part-Aboriginal population in the south. Citing figures similar to those used by Neville (referred to earlier), Kitson expressed concern at the increase in the population and the lack of Departmental control over the people. He stated that the 1905 Act did not empower the Department to deal with Aborigines in the south and that the time for a revision of the legislation was long overdue. He added that the Bill followed the trend in other states where legislation had been amended to allow for the strict separation of part-Aborigines from the wider community and their classification under the law with persons of the full descent.\(^{82}\)

The Bill considerably broadened the range of persons of Aboriginal descent who were to come under the legislation. All persons of full Aboriginal descent, those of not less than three-quarter descent and any male "half-caste" over the age of twenty-one who, in the Chief Protector's opinion was unable to manage his own affairs, were to be automatically deemed "Aborigines" within the meaning of the Act. In addition, the definition of "half-caste" was to be broadened to include persons with "half-caste" parents on both sides, and "half-castes" with other than Aboriginal mothers. Adult "quadroons" were also to be included under the Act. Those clauses in the 1905 Act which had previously applied only to "Aboriginal natives" were now to apply to "half-castes" and
"quadroons" as well. Kitson pointed out that this would permit the legal removal of such persons to the settlements. The Bill would also make cohabitation between "half-caste" women and other than Aboriginal men an offence and, for the women's "greater moral protection", the definition of cohabitation would be amended to include any act of sexual intercourse. The Chief Protector's powers of legal guardianship over children of Aboriginal descent would also be broadened to include children whose parents were legally married as "the legitimate children of legally married natives require[d] the protection of a guardian as much as...the illegitimate children". The Bill allowed for the extension of the period of legal guardianship from sixteen to eighteen years.

The Bill also contained several provisions relating to employment. To enable the Department to exert more control over young men sent out from the settlements to work the Bill increased the age of employment for male "half-castes" from fourteen to twenty-one. To prevent the abuse of Aboriginal workers by their employers, the Chief Protector was to have the right to demand statements of Aborigines' financial affairs from their employers. In addition, employers would be accountable for medical expenses associated with injuries sustained by Aborigines in the workplace. The Bill also gave the Department the power to force Aborigines to undergo medical examinations and treatment (particularly in cases of venereal disease) and granted the Governor the right to make regulations concerning the control of missions and the work of itinerant missionaries. In recognition of the Department's dependence on the police at the local level the Bill redefined its administrative districts to coincide with police districts.
The members of the Legislative Council were generally in favour of extending the scope of the legislation to include virtually all persons of Aboriginal descent. In debate they expressed prevailing white community attitudes about persons of part-Aboriginal descent: references were made to part-Aborigines getting to know "rather too much" and being more difficult to deal with than Aborigines. H.J. Yelland (East) drew attention to Mendel's "Law of Reproduction" which showed "what effect is brought about by the admixture of blood". Most speakers displayed a profound ignorance of the situation of Aborigines in the south: J. Nicholson (Metropolitan) told the House that Aborigines looked on Moore River settlement as a "good health resort" and used it as a regular camping ground. Meanwhile, J.J. Holmes (North) claimed that "generosity" had wiped out the Aboriginal population in the south and that the "generous" nature of the Bill would lead to the same situation in the north. Although Kitson had underplayed the relevance of the Bill for the north, the major criticisms of its provisions came from Opposition members who expressed the opinion that it would have a disastrous effect on the employment of Aborigines there.

Introducing the Bill in the Legislative Assembly, the Minister for Agriculture, H. Millington, told the House that the "half-caste" had not "really evolved beyond the aboriginal stage" and "in many cases he [was] a less desirable person than his aboriginal torbeard". Such persons were therefore as much in need of protection as Aborigines of the full descent. This statement was contradicted by the Leader of the Opposition, Sir James Mitchell. In contrast with his statements during the debate on the franchise in 1925, he stated that many part-Aborigines lived "clean, decent lives" and
they deserved to be treated "as if they were able and equal". He also objected to the increased powers of the Chief Protector warning that "we are not entitled to assume that the powers that are given will always be wisely executed". E.H. Angelo (Gascoyne) recommended the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into appropriate systems of administration and control of Aborigines and to investigate ways of limiting the part-Aboriginal population. Why should they "perpetuate their race" he asked, when their future lives were "to be anything but happy". However, the major opposition came from the pastoralist lobby led by A.A.M. Coverley, the first Labor member for the Kimberley and a staunch supporter of pastoral interests. He had the reputation of being "a great believer in the underdog" and in 1925, after he had attacked the Department of the North West in Parliament, the Westralian Worker praised him for "setting an example to the older members in advocating the cause of a section of humanity which does not possess a vote, and which has not the slightest political influence whatsoever". However, his attack on the administration hardly constituted a plea for the rights of Aborigines and in 1927, during debate on the Onmalmeri massacre, he had asked the government if it would provide settlers in the north with "adequate protection to enable them to go on developing the North West" or whether it would continue to "muddle on under the present stupid system of protecting aborigines to the detriment of the settlers as a whole". In 1929 he strongly opposed any further Departmental intervention in the employment of Aborigines in the pastoral industry, objecting in particular to the provision obliging employers to pay for medical expenses of Aboriginal workers. He told the House that if such measures were introduced pastoralists would not employ Aborigines and this would result in a "disadvantage
of the white people in the north". The Bill was defeated by a vote of twenty-one to twelve. This was a major disappointment to Neville and he later blamed the failure of the Bill on the fact that it was introduced late in the Parliamentary session and that there had therefore been insufficient time for full discussion of its provisions. However, he was not easily deterred. As will be discussed later, he continued to push for the introduction of the Bill during the early 1930s and it was to provide the basic guidelines for the strict amending legislation eventually passed in both Houses of Parliament in 1936.

**Trends at the National Level**

From the mid 1920s there was a revival of interest in Aboriginal affairs by a small but influential group of people in the eastern states. Mostly from humanitarian (mission and philanthropic) and academic backgrounds, these people and their organisations demanded better protection and care for Aborigines and advocated the introduction of new and more relevant policies in Aboriginal affairs. At the same time a surge of scientific research opened up debate on certain long-held racist assumptions about Aborigines. Initially these trends had little impact on Western Australia. Biskup (1973) attributes this to its physical isolation and the lack of identity of public interest between Western Australia and the other states, as exemplified in the appeal of the secession movement in Western Australia during the early 1930s. Nevertheless, several eastern states and nationally based organisations lobbied the Western Australian government and the debate received some coverage in the Perth newspapers. Neville, who was strongly influenced by the new ideas emanating from the eastern states, attempted to promote both govern-
ment and community support for their implementation in Western Australia. However, it took the controversies which erupted in Western Australian during the Depression years of the early 1930s to bring these ideas into the arena of public debate.

The changing tide of opinion reflected, in part, broader changes in international morality during the 1920s (evidenced in particular in the work of the League of Nations) and increasing concern within Australia about world opinion on the treatment of the country's indigenous population.95 The Onalmeri massacre and the massacre of a group of Aborigines near Alice Springs by a police patrol in 19289 together with reports of bad conditions and cruelty to Aborigines in northern Australia during the late 1920s aroused considerable disquiet in south-eastern Australia and in the overseas press.96 As a result, several eastern states and nationally based organisations began to lobby the state and Federal governments, demanding the creation of large inviolate reserves where tribal Aborigines could live according to their own traditions, free from the threat of cruelty and injustice at the hands of whites. They also urged governments to introduce measures providing greater

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9 In November 1928 reports appeared in the eastern states press of an alleged massacre of Aborigines by a police patrol near Alice Springs in retaliation for the murder of a white dogger named Brooks. The Aborigines were reportedly starving and were said to have killed the man for his food. Police involved in the massacre stated that the patrol had shot to kill as they were unable to treat wounded people away from "civilisation". The Federal government appointed an independent Board of Inquiry to look into the alleged massacre. The Board's Report, tabled in Federal Parliament in January 1929, stressed the need for more police in the area, stated that there was no evidence to support the claim that the Aborigines were starving and that thirty-one Aborigines had been shot "justifiably, in self defence" (Rowley, 1970: 289).
protection for Aboriginal women and children and for all Aborigines in employment. In 1927 the National Council of Women recommended in a letter to the Western Australian Premier that greater protection be provided for Aborigines in remote areas of the state, along with regular government patrols and adequate reserves. In the same year the Aborigines Protection League, founded in Adelaide in 1926, petitioned the Federal government to establish the Northern Territory as a "model State" for Aborigines with its own elected representatives in Federal Parliament. In 1928 the Aborigines Friends Association, founded in Adelaide in 1858, recommended that part of Central Australia (to be named Aboriginal Territory, Central Australia) be set aside as an inviolate reserve for Aborigines, under Federal control. Although these organisations did not have branches in Western Australia, their recommendations were forwarded to the state government and brought to the attention of the Department and the local press. Neville was both supportive of some of the recommendations made by these organisations and defensive about the actions of his own Department. When the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science forwarded a circular to the Prime Minister and all state Premiers in 1932 recommending, amongst other matters, the establishment of special courts of law to hear cases involving offences by Aborigines against their customary laws, Neville was quick to point out that he had made the very same recommendation to the Royal Commission into the Federal Constitution in 1927.
The question of Federal involvement in Aboriginal affairs also emerged as an issue. Just two months after the tabling of the Report of the Woods Royal Commission into the Onomalmeri massacre in 1927, Prime Minister S.M. Bruce moved in Federal Parliament that an extra-parliamentary Royal Commission be appointed to examine the status and general treatment of the Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal population in all states. Although the Western Australian government agreed to accord all necessary facilities to a Royal Commission it refused to contribute in any way to its expenses. In October of the same year the member for Bass moved in the House of Representatives that a joint select committee be appointed to look into the condition of Aborigines and the possibility of cooperation between Federal and state governments in Aboriginal welfare. The motion was lost.

The Prime Minister subsequently appointed a Royal Commission, headed by the Queensland Chief Protector, J.W. Bleakely, to investigate conditions in the Commonwealth territories of Central Australia and the Northern Territory. The Report of the Royal Commission, tabled

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* As was indicated in Chapter Two, this was first mooted in 1901 with the establishment of the Commonwealth government. The matter was raised again in 1911 at the time of the planned transfer of control of the Northern Territory from South Australia to the Commonwealth government when the Association for the Protection of Native Races requested the Federal government to assume responsibility for Aboriginal affairs in Australia. In the following year a deputation of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science requested the Prime Minister to appoint a Commission to look into the obligations of the Federal government towards Aborigines. In 1913 the same organisation recommended the appointment of a permanent Native Commission consisting of representatives of the Federal and state governments to promote the development of a national policy on Aboriginal affairs (Biskup, 1973).
early in 1929, recommended sweeping changes, many of which were of national importance and relevance. Interest in the recommendations of the Report was so intense that the Minister for Home Affairs convened a conference of interested government officers and residents from the Northern Territory. The issue of Federal control was raised and the Conference recommended that the next Conference of Premiers consider "the whole question of the proper coordination and adjustments of policy with a view ultimately to Commonwealth control". However, in the same year the Royal Commission into the Federal Constitution recommended that the states retain control over Aboriginal affairs as they held direct responsibility for police, Crown lands and employment. This recommendation put a damper on the movement towards national administration.

Neville was amongst those witnesses who gave evidence to the Royal Commission in Perth in 1927. He was a staunch advocate of Federal control, seeing it as a positive step towards the development of a uniform national policy which would rise above the parochial interests of the individual states and as a way of opening up increased funding for Aboriginal welfare. He was convinced that the establishment of a central administration would provide a "golden opportunity" for dispensing with the system of police protectors. The matter of Federal control did not rest with the recommendations of the Royal Commission and in 1933 Prime Minister J.A. Lyons announced that a conference of Federal and state authorities would be held to enquire into the future welfare and control of Aborigines and the development of a national policy on Aboriginal affairs. However the conference was not held until 1937. By this time the momentum had been lost and the question of Federal control was not even put to the vote. It was to be another thirty years before
this principle was established.

Another trend at the national level during the late 1920s was the emergence of anthropology as a respectable scientific discipline in Australia. This was stimulated by the creation of a Chair in Anthropology at the University of Sydney in 1925. Delegates to the 1923 Pan-Pacific Science Congress had strongly recommended the establishment of a Chair in Anthropology in Australia to coordinate the study of the indigenous peoples of Australia, Melanesia, and New Guinea, to train researchers, to prepare administrators and missionaries for the field, and to provide university courses for students. The Chair was established with Commonwealth and state funding and a generous grant for research was provided by the Rockefeller Foundation. An Australia-wide Anthropological Sub-Committee was set up by the National Research Council to advise on necessary areas of research and the distribution of grants, and a Permanent Advisory Committee was also established to assist in organising field research. A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, a prominent British anthropologist who had carried out fieldwork with Aborigines on the northwest coast of Western Australia between 1910 and 1912* and in the lower Darling and Murray River districts in southeastern Australia during the war years, was appointed as Foundation Professor. The first field workers were sent out in 1927 and by 1930 there were a dozen researchers in the field.¹⁰⁷

Radcliffe-Brown's approach to anthropology differed dramatically from that of earlier researchers in Australia. Previously, ethno-

* Radcliffe-Brown collected a good deal of his information during the period from Aborigines incarcerated at the Lock Hospitals on Dorre and Bernier Islands off the Carnarvon coast.
graphic research was done largely by untrained amateurs. They generally collected data on a single cultural trait across a range of cultural areas and their findings were used in turn by "armchair" anthropologists in Europe and Britain in developing broad theories of the social and cultural evolution of mankind. Social Darwinism had placed Aborigines at the lowest rung of the evolutionary ladder and their social and cultural forms were expected to shed light on the beginnings of human social and cultural evolution. Radcliffe-Brown advocated intensive fieldwork by trained anthropologists and adopted an holistic approach to the study of Aboriginal societies which were to be studied as integrated functioning social organisms. To a lesser extent he was interested in describing social change resulting from contact with Western society and the probable implications of these changes for any particular society. Using principles developed from a wide range of such studies, he believed that it would eventually be possible to develop constructive policies in relation to the administration of Aboriginal affairs in Australia. 108

Neville welcomed these developments and in his 1928 Annual Report wrote enthusiastically of the potential benefits of anthropological training for administrators in Aboriginal affairs. He actively promoted anthropological research in Western Australia and was a member of both the Anthropological Sub-Committee to the National Research Council and the Permanent Advisory Committee. However, under Radcliffe-Brown the Anthropology Department proved to be essentially research oriented. Radcliffe-Brown was adamant that the collection of detailed ethnographic research on Aboriginal societies was essential before courses of practical relevance to administrators could be developed, and under his direction the
Department focussed on research and the teaching of anthropology. The Anthropology Department developed a more practical orientation under A.P. Elkin who was appointed Lecturer-in-Charge of the Department in 1933 and subsequently became Professor of Anthropology.* Elkin was an Anglican minister with missionary connections and he actively encouraged missionary bodies to send their workers to the Department to be trained in introductory anthropology and linguistics. He also attempted to persuade politicians to appoint administrators with anthropological training.109

Neville's relations with the Anthropology Department deteriorated from 1930. In that year, as an economy measure, the Western Australian government withdrew its annual contribution to the Anthropology Department (a mere £96). In the following year Ralph Piddington, an anthropologist who had done field work at La Grange Mission in the West Kimberley, angered Neville by publishing articles in the eastern states press and the British Anti-Slavery Reporter and Aborigines Friend** critical of his administration. As a field worker with government permission to communicate directly with Aborigines and to enter Aboriginal reserves, Piddington was able to observe at close range conditions in areas inaccessible to the public and which were generally only reported on by administrators, missionaries and pastoralists. Piddington was shocked by what he observed and accused the Western Australian government and the Department of condoning slavery in the pastoral industry and of indifference to the welfare of Aborigines in the north of the state. Neville subsequently informed the Anthropology Department

* Radcliffe-Brown left to take up the Chair in Anthropology at Chicago University in 1931 and his successor, Raymond Firth, remained for only eighteen months (Berndt, 1955).

** This was published in London by the Aborigines Protection Society, an organisation dedicated to the abolition of slavery throughout the world (Biskup, 1973).
that Piddington would no longer be permitted to carry out research in the state and that in future researchers should be instructed to refrain from making statements critical of the state administration.110* Neville continued to support anthropological research, however from this time there was much stricter Departmental control over researchers. Nevertheless Piddington's allegations and his view that the intellectual capabilities of Aborigines were equal to those of Europeans were to strongly influence Mary M. Bennett, a woman of missionary background who was to play a major role in events leading up the appointment of the 1934 Royal Commission into the condition of Aborigines in Western Australia.

Research by social and physical anthropologists, psychologists and anatomists during the late 1920s and the 1930s served to open up debate on generally accepted racist beliefs about Aborigines. Although much of the research simply reinforced existing misconceptions, there was also some questioning of these beliefs and this contributed to the call for a reappraisal of government policies and the abandonment of policies premised on the ultimate extinction of Aborigines. This was particularly so in relation to part-Aborigines. The 1927 National Census provided ample evidence that the part-Aboriginal population was larger than was generally believed and that it was increasing at a rapid rate relative to the dominant

* Another researcher who angered Neville at this time was Dr Withington, a medical expert who visited areas in the extreme north of the Kimberleys and the Northern Territory in the company of a representative of the Pathe Freres cinematographic company. Neville had taken steps in 1929 to introduce regulations to strictly control photographing and filming of Aborigines and he was greatly angered to read in a Hollywood movie magazine that film footage taken during Withington's trip in the north had been used in a commercial film, Blonde Captive, the story of a white woman captured by Aborigines and set in Western Australia (Neville to MRC [oral], 1934: 102ff.).
white population and there was growing concern about the future of a large outcast coloured minority in Australia. Scientific research and debate during this period contributed directly to new directions in policies pertaining to part-Aborigines. Much of the debate focussed on the mental capabilities of Aborigines and this had direct implications for policy planning. If Aborigines and part-Aborigines proved to be equal intellectually to Europeans, then they could conceivably be tutored to take their place in the wider community. If not, they would have to remain "a race apart". Researchers during this period drew their evidence from the measurement of the cranial capacity of Aborigines, the analysis of their cerebral structure and psychological testing. Greater cranial capacity was held to indicate greater intelligence and during the 1920s contradictory opinion was presented on the average cranial capacity of Aborigines. As Markus (1982) points out, the researchers Fry and Pulleine claimed in 193 that Aborigines had the lowest cranial capacity of all the various groups of people they had studied, while G. Morant and W.H. Woolard stated that their research placed Aborigines well within the European measurement range. Intelligence testing also produced controversial results. In 1929 Radcliffe-Brown predicted that testing currently being undertaken would show that Aborigines were of equal intelligence to any other race. However, the results of testing by Dr S.D. Porteus,* Professor of Racial Psychology at the University of Hawaii, of Aboriginal children from Hermannsburg (Central Australia), the northwest coast of Western Australia and the settlements of Moola Bulla and Moore River, published in the same year, failed to fulfil

* Porteus was invited to carry out this research by the Australian National Research Council (Markus, 1982).
Radcliffe-Brown's expectations. Porteus claimed that his tests showed that while Aborigines were not unintelligent in relation to their own environment, they lacked the "ethnic capacity" to advance to "civilisation". 114 Porteus' work was criticised by academics in Australia and the United States. In a review in 1932 Elkin stated that Porteus' findings were inconclusive and suggested that the higher scores achieved by Aborigines with longer contact with white society, overlooked by Porteus, indicated that these people "may have learned to adapt to our unhurried way of doing things". However, Elkin would go no further than to suggest that "Aborigines might derive some benefit from education, not that one could expect them to perform as equals in a 'civilised' environment". 115 In the same year, Majorie and Ralph Piddington claimed that the results of most intelligence tests were "ludicrous" and that mental tests were "quite unsuited to natives reared in the primitive environment". For example they were unfamiliar with handling pencils and their interpretation of the objectives of tests differed from that of the investigator.

The American anthropologist, Ashley Montagu, stated in an article in 1938 that Porteus had failed to interpret his results correctly and that his tests merely demonstrated that the Aborigines' cultural environment differed significantly from that of the Europeans. 116 Elkin's views on the racially determined mental capacities of Aborigines oscillated between ambivalence and a belief in their congenital inferiority. In 1932 he wrote

...we must face the physiological fact that the aborigine is, generally speaking, endowed with a comparatively small size of brain, the average capacity of which is twenty per cent less than ours. Now this implies a handicap in the brain machinery.
He also cast doubts on whether persons of mixed Aboriginal and Caucasian descent were "biologically capable of playing an average part in a civilised society". Nevertheless he believed that it was behooven on white Australians to guide part-Aborigines, in particular, along the path to "civilisation" and to make every effort to bring about improvements in their living conditions. He stressed that this could only be achieved through a thorough understanding of Aboriginal languages, their way of life and their world of thought and to this end he lectured and wrote to inform the general public and actively encouraged politicians to appoint administrators with anthropological training. * Elkin also supported the work of the missions and he was an active member of the Association for the Protection of Native Races, a prominent humanitarian organisation founded in Sydney in 1910 which had "gradually replaced Exeter Hall as the keeper of the government's conscience".118 In 1931 Elkin delivered a paper to the Association in which he advocated the introduction of a new positive policy towards Aborigines. ** Elkin urged

...all who value[d] our country's reputation, or who appreciate[d] the responsibility of a civilised nation to a primitive race [to] think hard upon the matter: study it; frame policies; create a public opinion, and so give the Chief Protectors the backing they need, and above all persuade the Governments to set in motion a positive policy which aims at the welfare and the development of the aborigines as well as the advantage of the white folk of Australia.119

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* Goodall (n.d.) details the role played by Elkin in establishing anthropologists as "white experts" in the new system of administration of Aboriginal affairs introduced in New South Wales in 1938. This was at the expense of the involvement of Aboriginal activists who had pushed for government reforms from the 1920s and 1930s.

** This paper was printed as a pamphlet in 1933 under the title A Policy for Aborigines.
He also recommended the introduction of training in anthropology for all administrators in Aboriginal affairs, increased powers for the Chief Protectors over Aborigines and a positive educational programme for Aborigines including religious instruction, basic numeracy and literacy, geography and training in work oriented skills. Elkin's ideas had little immediate impact and, although they were adopted in principle at the 1937 Conference of Commonwealth and State Administrators, his policy of assimilation was not implemented until the early 1950s. This policy bore similarities to earlier policies of "tutored" assimilation in that its ultimate aim was that persons of Aboriginal descent should live in the same way as white Australians. However, it was not premised on racial or cultural extinction, rather it advocated a process of cultural adjustment whereby Aboriginal ways would gradually give way to a European lifestyle and Aborigines would be able to shape the course of their own lives. In practice the implementation of this policy frequently fell short of this ideal and was often barely distinguishable from the enforced social engineering of the early twentieth century.

Scientific inquiry in the fields of genetics and human evolution during the 1920s, carried out largely by medical and zoological researchers, contributed to the development of an alternative policy of biological "assimilation" or "absorption" of part-Aborigines into the dominant white race. The advocates of biological assimilation drew on research postulating common racial origins and genotypic racial characteristics for the Aboriginal and Caucasian races, and Mendelian theories of genetic inheritance to develop a crude scientific rationale for controlled programmes to breed out the Aboriginal race. The controversial aspects of this policy included the possibility of atavism or "throwbacks", the number of generations required to breed out "black blood" and the possible effects of the
admixture of Aboriginal "blood" to the European racial stock. Many Australians remained convinced that racial mixing led to the physical degeneration of the races, despite the rejection of this notion in other countries such as the United States as early as 1910. At the same time the prospect of deliberately encouraging inter-marriage between white and black was anathema to most white Australians. Advocates of this policy during the 1930s included N.B. Tindale of the South Australian Museum, Professor A. Watson of the Adelaide University, Dr R. Cilento, Director of Health in Queensland, and Chief Protector Neville in Western Australia. Watson reassured readers of the *Ladder* in 1938 that race mixing would do

...no harm, but would only introduce a fine healthy strain. All signs of the aborigine will disappear in three generations of white marriages. They are not like negroes and other fuzzy headed races whose characteristics it takes 30 generations to breed out.

Tindale stated confidently that, on the basis of his own extensive fieldwork during the 1930s, he was confident that Aborigines were relatively "digestible" and that there was no evidence of "throwbacks" or "aberrant characteristics". In the process of his research Tindale developed complex and rigorous genetic classifications of part-Aborigines which Markus (1982) has described as "the unintended reductio ad absurdum of his generation and perhaps the epitaph for a generation or more of aborigines". Such classifications were to play a fundamental role in the administration and control of Aborigines in Western Australia from the mid 1930s.

It appears that the policy of biological assimilation was first mooted in Western Australia by an unidentified doctor in a series of articles in the *Fremantle Times* in 1921. During the early
1930s Neville sought to popularise the policy in a number of articles in Perth newspapers published under the initials "A.O.N.". Neville's support for the policy stemmed from his alarm at the rapid increase in the part-Aboriginal population in the south and the deterioration in their living conditions. It also fitted with his ideas of social engineering and rigid control of part-Aborigines and it appeared to provide a neat administrative solution to what he considered to be a growing "menace" which future white Australians would "blame us for bequeathing to them".

Neville claimed that due to "in-breeding", the part-Aboriginal population had become a

...nameless, unclassified outcaste race, increasing in numbers but decreasing in vitality and stamina, and largely unemployable. The fathers are better men than the sons and the grand-fathers are better than either. 125

He stated that the people had abandoned their "tribal ways" and had acquired sufficient education to "enable them to become defiant and unrestrained", 127 and, lacking the bearing of the "uncontaminated black", they could "only ape the white". He expressed particular concern at the growing number of "white natives" growing up in the camps without any education apart from the "vices" of the camps. He stated that it was a "lot of nonsense" to talk about "letting these people work out their own destiny" and he asked his readers how an "uneducated, untrained, ill-nurtured weakly people such as these [could] fight against life as it [was] today". 128 Neville's answer was simple: "our coloured people must be helped in spite of themselves". The introduction of strict legislative controls over the people would
...enable every phase of the question to be
dealt with as its case merits and...provide
the wherewithal to do the job properly...
these people can be regenerated.129

Neville was convinced that the "natural outcome of the position"
was for the "blacks to go white" and in 1933 he wrote in the West
Australian that Aborigines were

...of Caucasian origin and related to us.
...They are not 'Negrito'. This means that
with their inter-marriage with whites, the
white will gradually come to predominate
over the black.130

Neville assured his readers that there was no possibility of "throw-
backs" as etymologically Aborigines had been shown to be Caucasian
in origin. He was confident that after several generations the
"colour" would be bred out altogether. Meanwhile, Neville was
convinced that the "admixture of further white blood" to the part-
Aboriginal population would enable the people to acquire "the good
qualities of both races" and he predicted a marked overall improvement
in their physical condition in particular.131

Neville later outlined the details of his views on the implement-
ation of the policy of biological assimilation in his book,
Australian’s Coloured Minority, published in 1944. The text was
illustrated with photographs of part-Aboriginal girls and young women
of various "racial mixtures", intended to demonstrate their present-
ability once taken under the "protection and care" of the adminis-
tration and the "disappearance" of colour achieved by progressive
inter-breeding with whites and lighter strains of part-Aborigines.
One set of photographs entitled "Three Quadroon Sisters" pointed
out that the "large freckles on the face of the centre figure [were]
the only trace of colour apparent". Neville's ideas were essentially
an extension of the "social engineering" role of the settlements into biological engineering as well. All light-skinned children were to be removed from their parents and placed in government institutions where they would be completely isolated from their Aboriginal background and trained in white ways. As adults their interaction with darker-skinned people would be prohibited by law and their marriages "strictly controlled" to ensure that they married "lighter" or "white". In this way they would gradually be absorbed into the white community and over several generations the "colour" would be "bred out".

Neville's initiatives failed to generate community support for the policy of biological assimilation although there was general sympathy for its ultimate aims. The policy's apparent encouragement of miscegenation conflicted with prevailing community opposition to sexual relations between Aborigines and whites and most West Australians still believed firmly that racial admixture led to a decline in physical and mental stamina. Nevertheless, the policy was to have some immediate effect in Western Australia during the 1930s. Neville's support for Sister Kate's, established in Perth in 1933 as a home for "quarter-caste" children and designed to provide for their assimilation into the wider community, stemmed from his belief in this policy. Soon after the home was opened the Department began to transfer "lighter coloured" children from Moore River to be reared at Sister Kate's instead. Although the policy was not officially adopted by the Western Australian government, it formed an integral part of the provisions of the amending legislation passed in state Parliament in 1936. In addition, Neville's staunch support for the policy during the 1937 Conference of Commonwealth and State Administrators led to the passing of the following resolution:
This Conference believes that the destiny of the natives of aboriginal origin, BUT NOT OF THE FULL-BLOOD, lies in their ultimate absorption by the people of the Commonwealth, and it therefore recommends that all efforts be directed to that end. 133

The Western Australian Centenary Celebrations

Issues relating to Aboriginal policy were a long way from the minds of most Western Australians at the end of the 1920s. 1929, the eve of the Great Depression, also marked one hundred years of European settlement in Western Australia and this was the occasion of a round of community celebrations and festivities. The major emphasis of these festivities was on European progress, the courage and achievements of the state's pioneers and its present and future prosperity. There was little mention of Aborigines in the Centenary's self-congratulatory version of the history of settlement in Western Australia. The occupation of the land by the Europeans was presented as an "Arcadian idyll" with settlers "singing the 23rd psalm as they led their flocks into green pastures, like Abraham into the promised land"; 134 there was no recognition of the clashes between settlers and Aborigines or the death and destruction of the Aboriginal way of life which accompanied the spread of European settlement, or the contribution made by Aborigines to the development of Western Australia. The image presented of Aborigines was that they were the passive relics of a bygone past and that they had no place in the modern world of the twentieth century. Historical (including pictorial) material published on southwest Aborigines during this period took the form of a nostalgic reference to the quaint traditions of a soon-to-be extinct race of people* and the role that Aborigines

* A number of Daisy Bates' early articles on southwest traditions and Aborigines from Welshpool Reserve were reprinted in Perth newspapers, along with reminiscences of elderly settlers about
were assigned in celebrations depicting the history of Western Australia also reflected this view.

In August 1929 a series of historical pageants, performed by a number of prominent West Australian citizens and a small group of Aborigines, was staged at the Perth Town Hall. The presentation began with the appearance of Old Father Time speaking in soliloquy of European "voyages of old" along the Western Australian coast and the arrival of Captain Stirling's ship at the mouth of the Swan River. The scene then shifted to an Aboriginal camp where a group of Aborigines were sitting around a fire singing. At the sound of a gun off stage they retreated and two soldiers wearing the red coats of the 63rd Regiment entered the stage proclaiming "This 'ere spot will be all houses, shops and pubs". A case of champagne was then brought on and a full detachment of soldiers entered, followed by Captain Fremantle and Captain Stirling and, after a brief speech by Stirling, the town of Perth was proclaimed. A volley of shots was fired and the actors on stage joined in a toast to Perth and its founder, Captain Stirling. Mrs Dance, described as the first woman to arrive in Perth, then made a short speech. Finally, to the cheers of the audience, the stage was transformed: "the primitive scene with the men of 1829 was blocked out and the audience saw in its place a modern Perth, with aeroplanes flying across the sky".135

* (cont'd. from overleaf)

traditional Aboriginal life in the south. The West Australian Historical Society established a journal in 1927 and it published similar reminiscences together with diary extracts relating to traditional Aboriginal life in the south and early contacts between Aborigines and European settlers. In 1933 an old-time settler, Jesse Hammond, published his memories of Aboriginal life during the nineteenth century with the assistance of Paul Hasluck. At the same time the American anthropologist, D.S. Davidson, assisted Ethel Hassell in the preparation of two articles on the mythology and ethnology of the Wheelman tribe of the Jerramungup district which were published in *Folklore* and *Anthropos* in 1934 and 1936 respectively.
Early in the year Neville began plans for the Department's contribution to the celebrations. This was to take the form of a corroboree performed by Aborigines on the opening day of the Royal Show in October. Circulars were forwarded to all police and protectors in the south asking them to recommend Aborigines from their districts to take part in the corroboree. With one notable exception, they all replied that they knew of no Aborigines with the skills to stage a full-scale corroboree. Sergeant Anderson of the Narrogin Police Station wrote that Johnny Cockle and his son Ernie, Hoppy Williams, and Roy and Sandy Moses, all of the Albany district, knew how to dance and throw spears and kylies and he proposed that they assist him in putting on a "first-class vaudeville turn on the concert stage". Anderson was the current World Champion Indian Club Swinger and he could give an exhibition of various swinging combinations followed by fire club swinging on a darkened stage during which the Aboriginal men, dressed in traditional style, could dance while coloured lights were played on them. Such a performance, he assured Neville, would fetch "a double encore". However, Neville declined his offer and instead arranged for sixty Aborigines to be shipped down from the north to stage the corroboree. This plan was abandoned when the steamer on which they were to be transported broke down and could not be replaced in time to get the men to Perth. The Department's eventual contribution consisted of three tableaux in the procession of floats which passed through the streets of Perth in October 1929. Dressed in kangaroo skins and black bathing costumes and painted with ochre and whiting, two groups of Aborigines sent down from Moore River settlement depicted pre-1829 scenes of an Aboriginal camp and a hunting expedition, while a group of children, also from the settlement, presented a tableaux
entitled "Native School Room, c.1840". A few Aborigines, also probably from Moore River settlement, were included on a float depicting achievements in the north of the state. The only recognition of the contemporary Aboriginal population in the state and their work was a small exhibition of sewing and embroidery by girls and women from Moore River and New Norcia set up by the Aborigines Department in a pavilion at the Royal Show.¹³⁷

Conclusion

Despite the general public's indifference to the situation of Aborigines during the late 1920s, this period nevertheless provided the backdrop to the important events of the Depression years of the early 1930s. Some of Neville's concerns for Aborigines in the south during this period were well founded: while the population was increasing in size, the Aborigines' chances of finding employment were diminishing and their living standards were deteriorating rapidly. They were unwanted in the wider community and the responsibility for providing for their welfare was left entirely to the Aborigines Department which was under-funded and under-staffed and totally unable to meet any increased demands on its limited welfare and educational services. Neville could well ask what future lay ahead for these people without the prospect of major changes in policies and the administration of Aboriginal affairs in the state. Neville rejected demands from Aborigines in the south for positive changes which would enable them to live as normal citizens in the wider community; instead he advocated the introduction of increased controls and restrictions which would empower the Department to force them to undergo the assimilating process in the "native settlements" and to strictly regulate their lives when they were allowed to move
back into the community. As an ultimate solution he recommended the introduction of the policy of biological assimilation whereby they could be gradually "bred out" and thus disappear as a racially distinct minority group. Despite the fact that Neville's actions as Chief Protector had alienated him from most Aborigines in the south and antagonised the missionaries working with a significant number of them, he had nevertheless built himself a reputation as an expert on Aboriginal matters during the 1920s, both locally and at the national level, and it was his advice that was to guide the actions of the state government during the early 1930s.
FOOTNOTES - Chapter Seven

2. AR/1935.
5. 22 Geo. V No. VIII, 1931.
7. AR/1934.
17. AR/1927.
18. AR/1929.
19. AR/1928.
20. Philemona Willows, private communication.
21. AR/1930.
25. AR/1928.
27. AR/1934.
30. AR/1932.
32. Ibid.
34. Tom Bennell, Appendix I, Interview 2.
35. Ibid.
36. AR/1921, 1931.
38. A/34/1927.
40. A/121/1927.
41. Telfer, 1939.
42. Bignell, 1977.
43. A/423/1927.
44. Lancel Williams, Appendix I, Interview 7.
45. Ibid.
46. Lilly Hayward, Appendix I, Interview 5.
47. A/423/1927.
49. Clarrie Ugle, private communication.
50. A/162/1928.
53. A/461/1928.
54. Lancel Williams, Appendix I, Interview 7.
56. A/52/1929.
59. Woods Royal Commission, WAVP, 1927, No. 3.
61. AR/1927.
64. Hasluck, 1977: 205.
66. MH 8/2/1906; A/94/1928.
68. PD, 72, 1925: 626.
69. WA 25/9/1925.
70. ST 14/11/1926.
73. A/94/1928.
74. Ibid.
75. WA 27/10/1928.
76. WA 12/3/1928.
77. WA 19/4/1930; AR/1930.
78. WA 27/12/1929.
79. A/461/1928.
81. Ibid.
82. PD, 83, 1929: 1520-1529.
83. Ibid: 1524.
84. Ibid: 1883.
85. Ibid: 1884.
86. Ibid: 1740.
87. Ibid: 1634.
88. Ibid: 2058.
89. Ibid: 2101.
90. Ibid: 2106.
92. PD, 76, 1929: 454-5.
94. Neville to MNC (oral) 1934.
100. AR/1927; A/238/1921.
103. Ibid: 276.
105. Neville, 1944.
107. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
111. WA 25/3/1927.
113. WA 9/9/1929.
120. Markus, 1982.
125. Dr R.H.W. Reece, private communication.
126. Neville to MRC (oral) 1934: 2.
127. Ibid: 3.
128. WA 18/4/1930.
129. WA 19/4/1930.
130. DN 8/6/1930.
131. Ibid.
132. AR/1933, 1934.
133. Neville, 1944.
135. WA 13/8/1929.
137. Ibid.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Introduction

The situation of Aborigines in the south was brought to the attention of the West Australian public during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The Aborigines were devastated by the economic depression: unable to find employment, they were obliged to survive on meagre government rations and increasing numbers were forced into the already overcrowded town camps. Others were sent under Departmental orders to Moore River settlement. Malnutrition, disease and demoralisation were widespread in the camps and there was growing bitterness amongst Aborigines at their plight. The white town residents were alarmed at the growing number of Aborigines in the camps and their deteriorating living conditions and, as during the years preceding the First World War, they demanded greater segregation of Aborigines from the wider community. Dismayed at the situation of Aborigines in the south, Neville repeated his demands for a second settlement and pressed urgently for the introduction of legislation incorporating the policy of biological assimilation to provide an ultimate solution to the Aboriginal "problem". Although there was little community support for this policy, a small number of missionaries and philanthropists did take up the call for a review of existing government policies, particularly in relation to persons of mixed Aboriginal and European descent. Influenced by ideas emanating from the eastern states, they maintained that such persons were capable of living in the same way as white Australians. However, they continued to advocate policies based on their enforced segregation while they underwent the assimilating process. At the same time allegations of cruelty, slavery and government neglect of Aborigines
in the north erupted in the local, national and overseas press. In 1934, in response to these criticisms and mounting community concern at the situation of Aborigines in the south, the Western Australian government agreed to appoint a Royal Commission to enquire into the conditions of Aborigines in the state. These events provided Neville with the opportunity to press home his demands for legislative reform and in 1936, following the publication of the Report of the Royal Commission, legislation allowing for unprecedented controls over persons of Aboriginal descent was passed by the Western Australian Parliament. While the policy of biological assimilation was not officially adopted by the government, it nevertheless provided part of the underlying rationale for the 1936 legislation.

**Aborigines and the Depression**

The worldwide economic depression and the Western Australian government's own economic policies precipitated the collapse of the rural economy in the south of the state during the early 1930s. Despite problems in the local rural sector already evident during the late 1920s and warning signs on the overseas market, the government continued to promote agricultural development and, as the effects of the wider economic depression set in, the government pinned its hopes for general economic recovery on the rural sector. Unemployed workers were encouraged to take up farms and established farmers were called on to increase their output of wheat and wool. The consequence was that in 1930 wheat farmers produced a bumper crop of 53.5 million bushels (a state record at the time), however, at the same time the price for wheat plummeted. Although the Federal government honoured its promise to guarantee the price of wheat, many established and pioneer farms were unable to meet mortgage repayments and other costs
and they simply walked off their farms. Those who had ventured into wool production were affected by a simultaneous 60 per cent drop in wool prices on the world market. By mid 1935 the Agricultural Bank had over 2,000 farms in its possession on which almost £4 million was owed in outstanding debts. As other sectors of the Western Australian economy declined in response to the world-wide depression, unemployment levels in the state soared. By mid 1931 there were 6,600 unemployed in the Perth metropolitan area and mass unemployment in the southern rural areas.¹

By the early 1930s, the Aboriginal population in the south had grown to around 2,500. At least 47.1 per cent of the population was aged under twelve years (compared to 27 per cent for the white population),² and it was distributed largely in rural areas dependent on wheat production (see Table 3 overleaf). As marginal seasonal and contract rural workers, Aborigines in the south were particularly devastated by the collapse of the rural economy. In 1931 Neville wrote in his Annual Report: `At no time in the past fifteen years and, I believe, in the State's history have conditions been so hard for the natives, particularly in the south west....No section of the community has suffered more from the effects of the financial depression.³

Most farmers could no longer afford to take on outside workers while Aborigines already in employment were dismissed as farmers found they were unable to meet wage and contract payments. Some farmers offered work to Aborigines at reduced wages but, as we shall see, fear of ridicule and resentment from white workers led many Aborigines to refuse their offers. In 1932 only one hundred out of an estimated Aboriginal population of 2,500 in the south were in regular employment⁴
**TABLE 3**

**SOUTHWEST ABORIGINAL POPULATION DISTRIBUTION, 1935**

*(Hasluck, 1938)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midlands (including Moore River settlement)</td>
<td>719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Wheatbelt</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avon and Great Southern</td>
<td>1407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan (including institutions)</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
while an unknown number made a precarious living from rabbit hunting and short term labouring jobs. Tom Bennell of the Brookton district recalls:

...we had nothing. The times was starting to work in hard. That was when the Depression was on and you're lucky to get work. Out all day looking for work, walking round town asking. If you didn't have a horse and cart then you'd walk out looking for work. Sleep when the sun goes down. Then go on till you find a bit of work. Might be repairing fences, cutting down, a week's work. Well then you got to feed your family back home. Well then you got nothing left. Then you look for another job....Me and my wife we used to walk around, walk twelve or thirteen miles with a bluey on our backs.

Aborigines living near larger towns and in the Perth metropolitan area earned a meagre living from odd jobs such as chopping and carting firewood, making and selling cobweb brooms, wooden props for clotheslines, and bean sticks, collecting and selling old bottles, and gardening. At the same time the demand for domestic workers dropped dramatically and in 1933 only thirty-four trainees were sent out from Moore River settlement compared to eighty-six in 1929. The demand for casual domestic workers in rural areas dropped accordingly.

As the employment market shrank, Aborigines were obliged to turn to the government for assistance. Most Aborigines in the south were accustomed to working under the same conditions as white workers and many quite naturally applied for the same unemployment benefits. During the Depression years unemployed white workers were eligible for a sustenance allowance of seven shillings per person or placement in work relief schemes. Aborigines however, were considered ineligible for these forms of assistance. Aboriginal men in several districts were put off work relief schemes "on account of [their] colour" while those who applied for the sustenance allowance were
instructed to apply to the Department instead. Some Aborigines moved from the country to the anonymity of Perth to seek the sustenance allowance but their benefits were cut off as soon as their racial background was identified. Neville wrote in his 1930 Annual Report that Aborigines "suffered considerable hardship" before approaching his Department for assistance. This was hardly surprising given the Department's reputation amongst Aborigines in the south and the very real threat that unemployed Aborigines faced of being sent to Moore River settlement. In 1930 there were reports from several centres in the south that local Aborigines were starving, however there were only ninety-two Aborigines on the Department's ration lists outside of Moore River settlement. Aborigines in the Kojonup district were said to be "half-starved and dressed in rags" while a resident from the Williams district wrote in a letter to the Sunday Times that

...our poor hungry natives for three days scarcely had a bite. A baby died on our verandah. Many are sick and have broken out in sores through hunger.

In these dire circumstances Aboriginal families were left with no alternative but to turn to the Department for assistance.

Given its limited funding, there was little the Department could do apart from placing the families on the ration lists. A suggestion by Neville in 1931 that the Department be granted funding to generate work relief schemes for unemployed Aborigines was rejected out of hand while at the local level, police and other protectors had little time or inclination to assist Aborigines in finding employment. Although the number of Aborigines at Moore River settlement grew from 300 in 1929 to 500 in 1933, lack of funding and facilities prevented the wholesale removal of Aborigines from the wider community. By 1932 there were 892 Aborigines receiving rations outside of the
settlement (see Table 4 overleaf) and the number of ration depots in
the south had increased from eight in 1926 to twenty-eight in 1932. 15
At the same time the Department's annual ration bill had increased
to almost £6,000. 16

In 1931, despite the obvious increase in the number of Aborigines
dependent on the Department for their survival, the Mitchell National
country Party government ordered a 20 per cent reduction in the Depart-
ment's annual grant and it fell from £34,732 in 1930 to £28,515 in
1931. In 1933 the annual grant was reduced to £27,238, the lowest
level in eight years. 17 This led to an immediate reduction in the
ration scale issued by the Department: in 1931 the meat ration
introduced by Neville just three years earlier was halved and in some
areas cut out altogether. This meant that Aborigines were left to
survive on the meagre ration scale first introduced by Sir John Forrest
in 1898: ten pounds of white flour, one and half pounds of white
sugar, and a quarter pound of tea per week (children received half
this amount). This cost the government between 2/2d and 2/8d per
person, less than half the value of the sustenance allowance provided
for white unemployed. 18 Many Aborigines were thankful for the growing
plague of rabbits which formed a basic part of their diet during the
Depression years. Tom Bennell recalls

...we was on government rations - flour, tea,
sugar - no meat. Kiddies them days didn't know
what mutton was. Might get a job and get
a few bob to get some vegetables now and then
but by jove it was hard. We lived on damper
and rabbit them days. 19

The Department had little money to provide for the families' other
needs. Only 750 blankets were issued in the south of the state between
1930 and 1934 and one set of clothing was issued to needy Aborigines
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<td>1936</td>
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each year. This consisted of a pair of trousers and a shirt for the men and a dress and flannel for the women. This miserable level of assistance did little to relieve the Aborigines' plight. In 1934 Neville told the Moseley Royal Commission

...the natives throughout the southwestern and goldfields areas [were] suffering from malnutrition and their powers of resistance to disease [had] decreased considerably.

In addition he stated that infant mortality rates amongst Aborigines in the south had reached an alarming level and that many elderly Aborigines had died as a direct result of deprivations brought on by the Depression.

Aborigines accustomed to living standards equal to those of white labourers objected strongly to the inadequate levels of assistance provided by the Department and to the disparity between provision made for white and Aboriginal unemployed. In September 1933 a letter signed "60 or so aborigines or half-castes" was forwarded to several unions in the south drawing their attention to the Aborigines' desperate economic situation and to the inequity of the government's system of relief. Some of the protesters were union members and they accused the union movement of ignoring their plight. They objected that they had to rely on the "aboriginal allowance" when in the past they had enjoyed "a standard of living in keeping with the money [they] earned" and they described the level of relief provided by the Department as a "miserable pittance" and "totally inadequate". They urged the unions to support the principle of equal access to unemployment benefits for Aborigines and part-Aborigines and to raise the matter with the press, the Premier and their local members of Parliament. The Collie Miners Union and the Fremantle Lumper's Union supported
the resolution and the matter was raised at a meeting of the State Executive of the Labor Party. The Executive recommended that the matter be referred to the proposed Royal Commission into the condition of Aborigines in Western Australia. However, no further action was taken by the union movement.  

The Aborigines' lot was made harder by the Department's own efforts to further minimise expenditure on rations. Early in 1931 police were instructed that only the "most deserving" cases were to be issued rations. This meant preferential treatment for families and as a result many young single men, in particular, were left without any means of support apart from the food which their relatives shared with them. Neville ordered some young men to take up jobs offered to them through the Department and when they refused, either through the desire to avoid Departmental control over their lives, or because the wages offered were below minimum wage levels, they were informed that they could expect no further assistance from the Department. A son of Charles Cameron of the Cue district was refused rations by the Department after he rejected a job as a drover at 15 shillings a week instead of the standard rate of £2/10/- on the grounds that it would mean insulting remarks from "white people of a half-breed cutting down the wages". A. Mippy had a similar experience with the Department and during the Depression years was obliged to support himself and his elderly mother from his meagre earnings made collecting bottles at the rubbish tip in the Perth suburb of Claremont. The police and other protectors were also instructed to keep a close check to ensure that persons in employment, regardless of the period of employment, did not receive rations. This frequently led to hardship for the families, nevertheless the failure of the protectors to achieve their goals on occasion gave
rise to stories which have become part of Nyungar folklore. Cliff Humphries of the Kellerberrin district recalls an example involving Reverend Atwell, the protector at Pingelly:

He was a very hard fellow. He was a Minister but he was very hard. He'd say, "You'll get no rations today, I heard you been working. Oh yes, I heard about you working today. You'll get no rations. Alright you better go home". And my brother-in-law, he took one walk right around the shed and we were standing talking around the other side. "Hello", says Atwell, "I never seen you". "No", he said. "I just come in". "Oh, you want some rations". "Yeah". "Oh yeah", he says. Well that's how he was. Walks once around this building and he wants to give him some rations."

Some police officers were sympathetic to the difficulties faced by Aborigines during the Depression: Tom Bennell recalls that Constable Hess of Brookton was "one of the best policeman that ever been in the district". However, most resented the increased volume of work involved in rationing large numbers of Aborigines and this caused further hardship for Aborigines. Some police officers refused to issue rations altogether while others made their own rules on the eligibility of Aborigines for rations. The Narrogin police recommended that Aborigines with previous alcohol related convictions be refused rations and Aboriginal men at the Kojonup district were refused rations as the police considered they were not attempting to provide for their families.

The ration system gave the police and the Department unprecedented powers over Aborigines during the Depression. The extent to which both parties were prepared to manipulate this system to shape the behaviour of Aborigines was exemplified in the treatment of Aborigines living at the Walebing camp near Moora. The camp was situated on a travellers' camping reserve and Aborigines began camping
there on a permanent basis after the break-up of the Moora camp in the early 1920s. During the Depression years, numbers at the camp swelled as people moved in from surrounding districts to draw rations from the Moora police station. Neville was determined to break up this camp as he was convinced that the Aborigines were harbouring escapees from Moore River and in 1930, following complaints about numbers in the camp from Messrs Lee-Steere and Lefroy, owners of properties adjoining the reserve, Neville ordered the Aborigines to move to Moore River. They refused to go. A resident of the camp, A. Woodley, writing to the Department on behalf of the residents of the camp, stated that he had been in the district for thirty years and had hitherto always been able to find work. However now there was no work offering and the people could only earn money trapping foxes. The people were not willing to move to the settlement as they at least had a chance of finding employment on the outside and they objected to giving up their horses and dogs as they would be obliged to do if they moved to Moore River. He stated further that the movement of Aborigines into the camp from other districts meant that there was insufficient food for local people and he advised the Department to encourage them to move back to their homes. Neville subsequently wrote to the local protector, Constable A. Kaven of Moora Police Station, that since it was "impossible to ration all of these natives" he would "leave the matter of rationing" to his discretion.

The situation came to a head during the shearing season in 1931. Kaven was convinced that Aborigines who had been out shearing were receiving rations when they did not qualify for them. He therefore informed Neville that he would refuse to issue any without his prior approval. Neville supported Kaven adding that he intended sending
"all indigent Midlands Aborigines" to Moore River. In October Woodley reported to the Department that Raven was refusing to issue rations to the people and was instructing them to move to the settlement instead. He added that Aborigines in the Moora district were the "worst treated" of all. Rather than going to Moore River the families began to move to ration depots in the surrounding district until Neville ordered the closure of these centres, with the deliberate intention of forcing the people into Moore River. In 1931 Woodley again wrote to the Department stating that the people were starving but Neville simply replied that they had "only themselves to blame" for the closure of the Moora ration depot and that their objections to moving to the settlement were "absurd". The Aborigines maintained their stand until February 1932. when, after five months without rations, they walked into Moora and asked Raven to provide them with rail passes to the settlement. Even this was refused and they were obliged to walk to Moore River. 28

The Town Camps

The economic difficulties of the Depression forced increasing numbers of Aborigines into town reserves and camps in search of rations and employment and the support of their kin networks. Many families which had hitherto lived separately from other Aborigines were also forced by their economic circumstances into the town camps. Due to the lack of work in the surrounding districts, most families remained in the camps on a permanent basis, although a few younger and more optimistic people continued to move around their "rune" looking for work. At the height of the Depression, Aborigines were camped in some fifty centres in the south, and camps of up to 200 permanent residents were reported in the towns of Gnowangerup, Narrogin,
Williams, Wagin, Pingelly, Badjaling, Brookton and Beverley. In many towns Aborigines camped on gazetted Aboriginal camping reserves, others camped on wayside reserves and unused private and Crown land. The locations of existing town reserves at Kellerberrin, Kojonup, Williams and Beverley were changed during the early 1930s to provide more hygienic living conditions for the camp residents and to move the people further from the towns (usually a distance of one to six miles from the town boundaries) and new reserves were declared at Brookton (1931) and Collie (1937) to provide further accommodation for the influx of Aborigines into the towns. There was also a marked movement of Aborigines into the Perth metropolitan district (there was a similar drift of white unemployed to the city in search of employment). In 1929 police officers counted thirty-nine Aborigines in camps in the environs of Perth; by 1934 numbers had increased to 154. There were no gazetted camping reserves for Aborigines in the metropolitan area and they camped mainly on unused private or Crown land in the suburbs of Swanbourne, Midland Junction, Caversham, Guildford and Lockridge. There was also a small camp behind the Fremantle cemetery.

The deplorable living conditions in the town camps were a sorry reflection on the Western Australian government and community. Despite the dramatic increase in numbers in the camps, government assistance for the installation of basic facilities remained minimal and most local Roads Boards and Municipal Councils continued to refuse to provide basic services such as rubbish collection. Rather than offering assistance to the families, most white town residents simply demanded that the camps be closed down and the Aborigines moved from

* For further details on the gazetting of these reserves see Appendix II.
Aboriginal Camp near Lake Monger, Perth, late 1920s
their district. Meanwhile the Aborigines had no money of their own to install water and sanitary facilities and they were left to live in conditions which would have been considered intolerable for whites even during the stringent Depression years. At Williams camp there were two latrines for a population of between 70 and 120 people, while other camps had no sanitary facilities at all. Few had access to running water. In 1934 children at the Katanning reserve were reported to be vomiting from drinking the muddy water carted to the camp. Tom Bennell recalls that Aborigines at the Brookton reserve had to

...pay a contractor five shillings to cart water from the Brookton dam and the girls had to carry it from White's farm one and a half miles away. They had to do that every day of the week. And not only one bucket a day. They might have to get three or four buckets and carry it down to where their house was.

Few families owned more than "one or two cooking utensils, a kerosene tin and an old attache case containing a few clothes or groceries". Some still owned horses and buggies which "hung together with the help of wire and the mercy of God" and they were used to cart rations and stores from the town to the camps. The Aborigines built themselves shelters with considerable ingenuity out of old timber, cast-off kerosene tins, wheat bags, corrugated iron and bush wood. Aborigines at Narrogin made huts based on the model of traditional mia mias. They consisted of

...poles placed in a circle fastened together, six to seven foot high covered with sacks. The ground space inside was six foot in diameter. Sacks or old rugs cover the bare earth. There is no furniture. They must sleep on the ground."
Woman Outside Camp

Narrogin Reserve, early 1930s
Families of up to six huddled together inside these shelters and a fire at the entrance provided warmth in winter. When Paul Hasluck visited camps in the south in 1936 as a reporter with the *West Australian*, he found variations on this style including the bunching together of several *mia mias* to provide separate but connected living areas. He also saw *mia mias* made of kerosene tins, cut up and flattened out. Stacked together in a tent-like structure they provided a rough waterproof dwelling. Some of the larger shelters had "bush bedsteads" made of wheat bags strung on poles and supported by sturdy branches. Hasluck also found more substantial dwellings resembling conventional huts constructed out of wheat bags and kerosene tins. These had two or three rooms divided off by curtains made of wheat bags and had earthen floors and central fireplaces with chimneys which allowed cooking to be done inside away from the rain and wind. Some huts had household items such as bedsteads, tables and basins along with the ever-present kerosene tins used to carry water and brooms made of bundles of brush wood and rakes to clear out the huts.34 These dwellings provided little protection from the elements. Robert Bropho, whose parents left Moore River settlement after their marriage in the late 1920s and later set up camp at the edge of Butlers Swamp in the Perth suburb of Swanbourne, recalls that they lived in a hut made from "old galvanised tin or wheat bags and chaff bags and the railings cut from peppermint trees". In summer they suffered "the hot heat...and lilies and fleas" and in winter "it was cold and miserable...it was like a fridge".35

The high incidence of disease in the camps during the Depression years and the nature of the maladies reflected the poor diet and living conditions of the residents. Medical officers in most centres reported a high incidence of respiratory problems such as
Aboriginal Camp

Bassendean, late 1930s
bronchio-pneumonia and influenza, along with stomach and bowel ailments such as dysentery and gastro-enteritis. Chronic eye and skin diseases associated with malnutrition and vermin were a constant feature of life in most camps. Overcrowding and poor health facilitated the spread of epidemics of contagious diseases and in 1933 alone ten children died of whooping cough in the south. At the same time medical services for Aborigines remained minimal. Hospitals and medical officers in most rural centres continued to deny Aborigines access to normal medical facilities while the actions and attitudes of hospital staff and patients meant that many Aborigines were unwilling to use available services and this further compounded the problem. Most Aboriginal women were still confined in their own camps, either through their own choosing or due to the policy of the local hospitals. They were usually attended to by Aboriginal women from the camp. In 1936 the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Australia claimed in Perth that the lack of hospital care for Aboriginal women during childbirth was a major factor in the high mortality rates amongst Aboriginal women.

Neither the Mitchell government nor the Collier Labor government (voted into power in April 1933) was prepared to take effective action to improve conditions in the town camps during the Depression and both governments were of the opinion that the state's limited funds were better spent relieving the plight of the white unemployed. Meanwhile the Ministers in charge of the Department during this

* In the same year Neville requested police officers to enquire into hospital services offered to Aboriginal women in their districts during childbirth. Of 24 hospitals in the south, only 8 showed a positive and committed attitude to taking in Aboriginal women during childbirth (A/22/1936).
period, the Colonial Secretary in the Mitchell Ministry, N.M. Keenan, and the Minister without Portfolio in the Collier Ministry, W.H. Kitson, were strongly influenced by Neville, who continued to demand the reopening of a second settlement in the south and the closure of the town camps. In 1930, alarmed at the increase in the Department's ration bill, Cabinet authorised the resumption of the Carrolup reserve to provide a centralised camping ground and ration depot for Aborigines in the Great Southern district. However, this proposal met with general opposition from the white community in the south. A deputation of the Roads Boards Association of Western Australia to Keenan argued instead for the establishment of district depots where Aborigines could be retained under the supervision of the local police.\(^{39}\) This proposal stemmed from the concern expressed at the Association's Annual Conference in August 1930 at the growing part-Aboriginal population in the south and the "monaco" they would represent to the wider community if steps were not taken to mould them into "useful members of the community". In the opinion of delegates at the Conference this could be achieved most effectively by allowing Aborigines to remain in small localised groups with some contact with the wider community and the local labour market.\(^{40}\) There was also strong opposition from residents in the Katanning district to the re-opening of Carrolup. They alleged that properties adjoining the reserve would be devalued and the safety of white women and children in the district threatened. The Aborigines' dogs would worry stock, fires lit by Aborigines would lead to the destruction of crops and (conveniently forgetting the tens of thousands of years that Aborigines had lived and survived in the district), they claimed that the area was too cold and wet for them.\(^{41}\) The United Aborigines Mission (UAM) also opposed the establishment of a second settlement
in the south while at the same time condemning the lack of facilities in the town camps and the small size of the reserves on which the Aborigines were obliged to camp. In 1930 the West Australian Council of the UAM passed a resolution demanding that the town reserves be increased in size to enable the establishment of localised mission-run farming settlements where the Aborigines could acquire "some useful occupation by cultivating the soil" and thereby "become an asset to the State". 42 Meanwhile the Aborigines were opposed to any notion of "enforced segregation", either at Carrolup or in district reserves. William Harris, in what appears to have been his last public statement prior to his death, argued strongly against segregation in the following letter to the West Australian in 1931:

...a natives' reserve means imprisonment and the members of the roads boards seem to have forgotten that the natives...are law-abiding British subjects like themselves....Since responsible Government was obtained in this State the natives had been driven like cattle from pillar to post. 43

Brother Wright of the UAM mission at Gnowangerup reported that Aborigines there "would sooner starve than go to Carrolup", and that it was "those who [had] previous experience of the settlement who least desire[d] to return to it". 44 The scheme to re-open Carrolup was abandoned late in 1931, not in response to community opposition but because of concern within Cabinet at the associated expenditure of public funds which were urgently needed to provide for the accommodation of unemployed white workers. 45

This left the Department totally dependent on Moore River as a dumping ground for Aborigines during the Depression years. Aborigines were sent in mainly from the Central and Midlands districts to the settlement, while those in other parts of the south were left
to fend for themselves in the camps. Neville persistently refused to take action to improve conditions in the camps and continued to hold out for the opening of a second settlement in the south. He also sought to promote his demands in the Perth press, his Annual Reports and in discussions with local residents on his tours of inspection in the south. As numbers of Aborigines in the camps increased and living conditions deteriorated, the Roads Boards came increasingly to support Neville's idea of a centralised settlement. However all were vigorously opposed to the establishment of a settlement in their district.

**Mission Work in the South**

Missionaries and church officials in a number of towns provided some assistance to local Aborigines. In May 1930 the protector of Aborigines at Narrogin, Reverend Boxall, met with representatives of the Narrogin Municipal Council, the Roads Board and the police, and they agreed to cooperate in the establishment of an Anglican mission camp on twenty acres of commonage outside of the town. They told the press that they had decided to take this step as Aborigines were unwanted in the town and in the surrounding farming districts and the existing town camp (situated on Aboriginal reserve land adjacent to the sanitary depot) was unclean and a threat to the health of the white town residents. The land was to be temporarily reserved for the use of sick and travelling Aborigines on the understanding that it could be used on a long term basis. Boxall planned to allocate separate blocks to families settling there, with a separate camping area for visitors and an adjacent block for the Aborigines' horses. Each family was to erect its own cottage, and canvas bathrooms and toilets and a central tank were to be provided for the residents' use.
Missionaries and Aborigines

Kings Park, 1934
Neville presented the first impediment to Boxall's plans. He stated that there was no funding available to develop the land and to provide facilities. In addition, the land was commonage and could not be declared a reserve under the 1905 Aborigines Act. He advised Boxall to await the re-opening of Carrolup. The Narrogin Council then refused to consider alienating the land for the purpose of an Aboriginal reserve and Narrogin town residents stated that they did not want the Aborigines in the district at all. They agreed to take no further action but to wait for the opening of Carrolup. Meanwhile a group of Aboriginal men, including Arthur Calyun, Levi Moses, Phillip Morrison, Will Kelly and Charlie Berache, who had been sent to do preliminary clearing work on the block in return for rations, were refused their payment by the local police. Boxall informed Neville that the local policeman had walked out of his office stating that he was "sick of the rationing business and would be glad if I took it over altogether". Although Aborigines were subsequently moved to the block and Boxall appointed a "camp chief" to prevent white men from trespassing on the land, nothing was done to provide amenities for the residents. In the following year the Narrogin Council wrote to the Department enquiring how long it would be before the Aborigines were moved to Carrolup. They were informed that the matter of camps in the Great Southern was dependent on the re-opening of Carrolup.46

During the early 1930s the UAM continued to expand its operations in the south and in 1934 a branch of the mission was established at the Katanning reserve. A small mission school was opened and, following representations to the local member of Parliament, the Department agreed to instal a 400 gallon tank and toilets at the reserve.47 Soon after a mission was established at the Mooranoppin
reserve outside of Kellerberrin.\textsuperscript{48} Meanwhile, the work of Brother and Sister Wright at Gnowangerup continued to be dogged by opposition from the local townspeople. In 1933 there were 300 Aborigines living at the mission town camp and in the same year the reserve was condemned by the Gnowangerup Board of Health. The Gnowangerup Council recommended that the mission be moved to a four acre block outside the town boundaries and offered to instal a water supply and ablution blocks if the Department would purchase the block for £30. Neville put the proposal to his Minister, but Treasury stated that it was not possible to free this sum of money. In 1935 the UAM authorities began negotiations for the purchase of a block of 190 acres located two miles out of town. They proposed that Aborigines be charged a rental fee of 12/6d per annum to settle on half acre allotments on the block. The land was purchased in 1935; however the Aborigines showed little interest in moving so far out of town and by 1936 there were only a few families camped on the land. In the same year the Gnowangerup Council recommended that the town reserve be cancelled to force the Aborigines to move out of the town reserve.\textsuperscript{49}

Conflict also broke out between the residents of Quairading and Aborigines at the nearby UAM mission at Badjaling. In December 1932 the Quairading Roads Board forwarded a circular to all Roads Boards in the Great Southern advocating the segregation of Aborigines in the area on a centralised reserve and urging them to petition the Premier to this end. The circular was supported by the Wagen police, the Narrogin and Katanning Roads Boards, the Wesleyan rector at Mount Barker, and the authorities of the Quairading Hospital.\textsuperscript{50} In May 1933, following rumours of a proposal to create a one thousand acre reserve at Badjaling for this purpose, a deputation of Quairading residents waited on the Leader of the Opposition, Charles Latham,
demanding the total removal of Aborigines from the district. They alleged that the 200 Aborigines living at Badjaling were diseased and constituted a health menace to the white townspeople with whom they mingled on their visits to town to collect rations from the police. Lionel Yarran, spokesman for the Badjaling Aborigines, wrote to Latham asking him to oppose the proposal and stating that the Aborigines were not aware that they had done anything wrong and they had worked hard to set up the mission for their families. He suggested that the deputation may have been organised by newcomers to the district as the "old-timers" generally treated the Aborigines well. 51

Control of the Camps

The centralisation of Aborigines in the town camps brought them more directly under the supervision and control of the Department and the local police. This was particularly evident in the Perth metropolitan area. From 1931 the Department deliberately discouraged the employment of Aborigines in the metropolitan area and a system of regular inspections of Aboriginal camps in the area by Departmental officers and the police was introduced to strictly control behaviour in the camps and to halt the movement of Aborigines from the country to the city. Unemployed Aborigines were directed to move to Moore River settlement and those visiting from country areas were ordered to return to their homes. The police were instructed to stop their supply of rations to ensure that they did so. In 1932 Neville ordered the removal of all unemployed Aborigines in the Guildford camp (the largest in the metropolitan area) to Moore River. 52 In the following year, Aborigines at the Fremantle camp came to the attention of the Department after a corroboree held there as a money-making venture
was disrupted through the actions of a number of drunken white youths. Arrangements were made to send several of the Aborigines to Moore River and Aborigines from Williams and Narrogin at the camp were directed to return to their homes. The Fremantle Council made a paddock available for those allowed to remain in the district at the nearby suburb of Beaconsfield. 53

In his Annual Report for 1932 Neville wrote that despite their difficulties, Aborigines in the southern town camps had remained "patient" and "law abiding". Certainly there was no apparent increase in Aboriginal convictions: in 1932 there were 102 convictions in the state, compared to 105 in 1928. 54 In both years half of the convictions were alcohol related. However Neville noted that the enforced congregation of Aborigines in the camps and the widespread unemployment amongst Aborigines had led to a significant increase in conflict in relationships within and between families, reflecting the stress of their daily lives and the antagonism of the surrounding white community. He stated that gambling was a regular pastime and often led to fights while the crowding together of the families encouraged illicit sexual relationships which led to further conflicts. Neville also noted a growing tendency towards fatalism and apathy amongst the Aborigines which he saw as the "outcome of their inability to improve their position". 55 In 1931 Neville wrote that the Aborigines had borne their "sufferings...practically without complaint" and, being "by nature inarticulate", they had been "unable to assume a united front in the presentation of their case". 56 (He conveniently overlooked the Aboriginal deputation to the Premier in 1928 which showed that Aborigines were capable of organised protest and the various efforts of Aborigines during the Depression years to draw attention to their plight.) Nevertheless there was little
organised protest by Aborigines during the Depression years and this can be attributed to several factors including: the dispersed nature of the Aboriginal population, their lack of organising skills, the apparent hopelessness of such action, the dire circumstances in which most Aborigines were living and the possible repercussions of speaking out which included incarceration in Moore River and imprisonment. The death of William Harris in 1931 also meant the loss of the most prominent Aboriginal spokesman in the south. There were also those who shared the individualistic outlook expressed by a part-Aboriginal of the Mullewa district in a letter to the West Australian in 1930. He asked for a "fair deal" for Aborigines and advised the government to "let those who want to help themselves alone, and those who won't - well shift them away". There were others who did not identify as Aborigines, having been forced out of an essentially European way of life and into the town camps by the combined effects of the economic depression and Departmental and police interference in their lives. One such woman later told the 1934 Moseley Royal Commission that she could not "go back and live on the Aboriginal side" because she was "not wanted there" and she argued that since she was not an Aboriginal she "should not be pauperised any longer" by being subjected to the restrictive provisions of the 1905 Aborigines Act.

The response of many Aborigines to their plight in the camps was one of bitterness and passive rebellion. This was particularly marked amongst the younger men. One Aboriginal man told Hasluck during his tour of the camps in 1936 that

...a lot of these young fellows won't work more than they need to. What's the use if they do. You work hard but you can never get anywhere. You try to improve your place but you still never get anywhere, can't get any of the privileges the white people get.
Nevertheless there was a good deal of animated discussion within the camps. Lilly Hayward recalls that Aborigines at Gnowangerup

...used to talk about things, try to talk up for themselves but they didn't get anywhere, poor fellers. The blokes's dead now what used to talk a lot. That's Ned Coyne, Walter Penny, Jimmy Loo. They used to talk with Brother Wright about different things and say they wasn't getting a fair go. Oh Yeah. They always used to have an argument with him. But it didn't work.\(^\text{60}\)

The Gnowangerup Aborigines used Brother Wright as a spokesman to publicly express some of their more rebellious feelings. In 1933 Wright told the *West Australian* that the Gnowangerup Aborigines were threatening that when they were "stronger and hungry" they would just take what they wanted, there were "plenty of sheep in the paddocks" and they "might just as well steal them". They could only be sent to prison and the police could "not very well get a large number of them".\(^\text{61}\) In another letter to the *West Australian* in the same year he wrote that Aborigines in the district were "downtrodden" and were threatening that "when they were strong enough there would be something doing".\(^\text{62}\)

Events at Northam during the early 1930s showed that the Gnowangerup Aborigines were wrong in thinking that the local white community and the government would not take drastic action to punish rebellious behaviour. Aborigines at the Northam camp had a background of displacement and discriminatory treatment at the hands of whites. Many of the families were originally from New Norcia. Pushed off the mission early in the century, they had moved to Moora where they remained until the early 1920s when, following a sustained and vicious campaign by the white town residents, they were forced out of the town and into the surrounding districts. Several families found
regular employment in the Northam district until the Depression forced them to move into the Northam camp which was typically situated one and a half miles from the town in a river bed opposite the sanitary depot and the town rubbish dump.

The first signs of trouble occurred in late 1931 when the Aborigines were refused admission to the local cinema. When they complained to the local protector of Aborigines, Sergeant Carroll of the Northam police station, he upheld the decision of the cinema proprietors. On Christmas Eve there was a drunken fight in the main street of Northam between three white men and a group of Aboriginal men from the camp which resulted in the Aborigines being charged with disturbing the peace. On the following day Aborigines threw rocks at a motor-cyclist who rode past the camp and they were warned by the police that any further actions of this kind would be "detrimental to their interests". Two months later two white men entered the camp demanding to have sex with women in the camp and they almost came to blows with the Aboriginal men. Any petty thieving in the town was followed by a rigorous police search of the camp. One respectable middle-aged man from the camp was stopped in the main street and questioned by a town resident about a large bag of onions and potatoes he was carrying, and when he told the man to "mind his own business" he was taken to the police station and charged with unlawful possession of vegetables and a bottle of vinegar valued at four shillings. He was subsequently sentenced to fourteen days imprisonment and the police kept the food. In April fighting broke out in the camp between two rival families and their supporters and the Aborigines were warned that any further fighting would lead to prosecution and their "rations would be cut out and they would have to leave town". In May fighting broke out in the main street of
Northam after the men were supplied with alcohol by a white town resident, and fourteen of the men were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct. In the same month the Aborigines reported to the police that their dogs had been poisoned and that four of their horses had been stolen. They blamed the local white residents.\textsuperscript{64}

The Northam residents were not prepared to allow this situation to continue. Late in 1932 the Northam Medical Officer, F.T. Beamish, reported that three of the nine families in the camp had scabies and he claimed that they were a menace to the health of the town. He recommended that representations be made to the local member of Parliament, Premier Mitchell, to have the Aborigines moved out of the district altogether. This proposal was supported by the Northam Council in a letter to the Aborigines Department and a week before Christmas, Chief Protector Neville announced that the Minister had authorized the removal of Aborigines from the Northam district.

The official reason given for this action was that the Aborigines represented a serious threat to the health of the residents of Northam "owing to the persistence of scabies and other skin diseases". The Aborigines, however, later claimed that their removal from the town was "a political move to please the Premier",\textsuperscript{65} and similar allegations were made by white witnesses during the Moseley Royal Commission in 1934. These allegations were apparently well founded. State elections were due to be held in April 1933 and the Mitchell government was in a precarious position due to its failure to deal adequately with the effects of the Depression. Premier Mitchell's popularity in his own electorate of Northam was particularly low and he was to face the ignominy in the elections of losing his seat while holding the office of Premier. He therefore had good reason to support the demands of voters in his own electorate and to show
other voters that his government was prepared to take strong disciplinary action against Aborigines in the town camps. Certainly the speedy response of the Department and the allocation of £310 out of the Department's limited budget to cover the costs of the removal of the Aborigines to Moore River were uncharacteristic and it can only be assumed that the Department was pressured by the government to take rapid and effective action.

Neville instructed Sergeant Carroll that the Aborigines were to be rounded up on 16 January 1933, detained overnight, and placed on the 7.20 a.m. Goldfields Express train for Perth. They were then to be transferred to a train which would take them to the settlement. The police were instructed to use their discretion in deciding what baggage the families were to take with them but they were to order the Aborigines to leave their horses and dogs behind. Once the Aborigines had been moved the police were to clear the camp site and destroy the Aborigines' dwellings. On arrival at Moore River the Aborigines were to be quarantined in a special camp one and a half miles from the main camp where they would be supervised by specially appointed white staff and a hessian cookhouse and bathroom were erected for their use.

At the same time Ministerial warrants were issued for the removal of ninety Aborigines from the Northam district. John Egan was carting hay for a local farmer when

...Sergeant Carroll and Constable Wroth came out and brought the warrant that we was to shift out of Northam at once. That was an order from the Chief Protector of Aborigines. And take the train to the Settlement. 66

He and other Aborigines with drays and horses and dogs refused to leave them behind and the Department reluctantly agreed to allow...
them to travel overland to the settlement under police escort. The others were to go by train. One man arrived at the Northam Station to find his wife and children already on the train and the police refused to allow him to take them back to Wubin where he was working. They told him there was "no time to waste" and advised him to join his family on the train to the settlement where he could "put his case before the Superintendent". (A Ministerial warrant was subsequently issued in his name and he was obliged to remain at the settlement.) At the end of January, Sergeant Carroll reported to Neville that the Northam district was "now free of natives" and Neville formally congratulated the police for "the splendid way in which they carried out the business".67

When the Aborigines arrived at the settlement it was found that only three children and one woman had sores and by the middle of February these had been treated and cured. However, they were forced to remain at the settlement until May, when, following growing unrest in the camp, a small number of men were allowed to leave. They were warned that on no account were they to return to Northam and that those who did would be returned to Moore River. The others were detained at the settlement and moved into the main camp closer to the compound.68

The legality of the Department's actions in moving the Northam Aborigines to Moore River settlement was certainly questionable: the 1905 Aborigines Act allowed only for the removal of persons deemed to be "Aborigines" under the Act and who were unemployed. Many of the Northam Aborigines fell outside these categories. However, it was the injustice of the action of removing a large number of people from their homes on the basis of the reported incidence of a relatively benign skin disease and the suspected associated
political motives which attracted criticism in the Perth press during 1933 and during the 1934 Moseley Royal Commission. These themes also feature prominently in accounts handed down by Aborigines in the south about the Northam incident.

**Conflict in the Schools**

Up to this point, conflict in the south had centred on the town camps. However, in mid 1933 it broadened to include the presence of part-Aboriginal children in state schools, contrasting with events between 1911 and 1914 when this issue had come to a head early in the peace. This reflected the determination of the Parents' and Citizens' Associations to exclude the children from state schools and the Education Department's support for their demands. Most Aboriginal parents refrained from even attempting to enrol their children at local state schools, and there was no rush to send children to school as the Aboriginal families moved permanently into the town camps during the Depression years. The conflict erupted over the Collier Labor government's refusal in 1933 to endorse the exclusion of a small number of part-Aboriginal children who had been attending Wagin State School for several years, hitherto without any complaint from local white parents.

Tensions between Aborigines and whites in Wagin had been mounting since the late 1920s as the number of Aborigines camped around the town increased. Most families lived on the town gravel reserve while a few camped on blocks within the town boundaries and one man, employed by the Shire Council, lived with his family in a hessian hut on his own block of land. The white residents objected to the presence of Aborigines around the town and to their use of the gravel reserve, claiming that they were a "nuisance" and that their camps
were unhygienic and unsightly. In addition the town residents visited the reserve regularly to pick up gravel and the exposed nature of the camps there (they were overlooked by the main road) left the Aborigines open to interference from "unscrupulous" whites. The white residents demanded that the Aboriginal families be forced to live together on land reserved for their use and located some distance out of town, or that they be removed from the district altogether. Although Neville agreed to look into the matter of establishing a reserve, nothing was done and the situation remained unresolved.69

In May 1933 the Wagin police informed Neville that the local Parents' and Citizens' Association was objecting to the presence of fourteen part-Aboriginal children at the school and demanding their exclusion and the establishment of separate teaching facilities for them. In June the Education Department endorsed the decision of the Parents' and Citizens' Association to exclude the children and letters were forwarded to their parents instructing them to withdraw their children from the school.70 The West Australian, in announcing the decision, stated that it had the support of Parents' and Citizens' Associations throughout the state and that the annual meeting of the Federation of Parents' and Citizens' Associations in May 1933 had endorsed the concept of separate education for part-Aborigines.71 At the meeting a sub-committee had been appointed to consider the following recommendations put forward by the Brookton branch: that separate schools be established for all part-Aboriginal children; that the attention of the Minister for Education be brought to the need to train part-Aborigines to become self-supporting, thereby to relieve the wider community of the "perpetual burden" of providing for their needs; that a scheme be developed to train part-Aboriginal children in hygiene and cleanliness and in skills
in animal husbandry and arts and crafts; that schools for part-Aborigines be supervised by local education bodies such as Parents' and Citizens' Associations with the power to modify curricula to suit local employment needs; and that government funding be provided for equipment for the schools and rewards for industriousness to part-Aborigines. 72

Neville responded angrily to the decision to exclude the children. In May he wrote that since the establishment of Parents' and Citizens' Associations, part-Aboriginal children had been progressively excluded from state schools and that until recently Wagin had been one of the few schools where part-Aboriginal children were still admitted. 73 Again Neville looked to the settlement scheme as a solution and renewed his demands for the re-opening of Carrolup. Meanwhile the parents of the excluded children hired a local solicitor to present their objections to the Director of Education. They stated that they felt "hard done by": prior to the Depression they had been self-supporting, now they were unemployed and were denied access to the sustenance allowance and instead were obliged to exist on "meagre rations". They were convinced that the deterioration in their economic circumstances had contributed directly to the exclusion of their children from the school. They also enquired why their children, who were of less than half Aboriginal descent, had been excluded, while children from three other families who were of more than half Aboriginal descent had been allowed to remain at the school. They suggested that it was because these families lived in separate huts "like whites" while, due to their economic difficulties, they had been forced to live on the gravel reserve. 74

In June the Inspector of Schools recommended the establishment of a separate school at Wagin along the lines of those established
earlier at Beverley and Katanning. However Minister Kitson, in a letter to the Premier, warned that this would lead to an influx of families to the town and recommended the establishment of a second settlement in the south instead. In July Premier Collier informed the Education Department that he saw no valid reason for the exclusion of the children and that they were to be readmitted. He added that in future any exclusions were to have the prior approval of the Minister for Education. No official reason was given for this controversial decision. Collier may have seen it as an economical alternative to the establishment of separate schools or a second settlement, or he may have taken this step to avoid adding fuel to growing criticism of the government's handling of Aboriginal affairs. It may have also reflected his own attitudes to Aborigines. One old timer recalled that, as a goldfields resident, Collier was sympathetic to Aborigines and that he deplored the overt racism of white farmers in the wheat belt. Whatever the reason, Collier maintained his stand, despite strong objections from members of the Wagin Parents' and Citizens' Association who lobbied the Minister for Education demanding that the Premier reverse his decision.\textsuperscript{75} The objections of the Parents' and Citizens' Association at the Victoria Park State School in 1933 to the enrolment of children from Sister Kate's Home for part-Aboriginal children were also rejected by the government and the children were allowed to continue to attend classes.\textsuperscript{76} However, conflict continued to break out over the presence of part-Aboriginal children in rural state schools and in the long run Collier's actions had little lasting effect. In 1934 several part-Aboriginal children were excluded from Watheroo State School on the grounds that they "lived in tents without home comforts",\textsuperscript{77} and in the same year parents at Moora expressed
objections to the attendance of part-Aboriginal children at the local school. In 1935 the Gnawanjerup Roads Board demanded that all part-Aboriginal children in the area be sent to the UAM mission school.

Moore River Settlement

Conditions at the settlement deteriorated rapidly during the early 1930s as the settlement population increased and Departmental expenditure decreased. In 1933, when the population of Moore River had grown to 500, Departmental expenditure fell to £4,182 compared to £5,206 in 1928, when the population totalled only 300. This compared unfavourably with expenditure on other state institutions: Neville told the Moseley Royal Commission in 1934 that while the government spent £64/5/10d per annum on the maintenance of each prisoner at Fremantle Jail, the annual expenditure on each inmate at Moore River settlement came to only £9/13/-. The deterioration in conditions was not so noticeable to long-term residents who had grown accustomed to the sub-standard living conditions and poor diet provided at the settlement. Irene Farrell recalls that

...a lot of people came and went during the Depression years, but we really didn't notice the Depression much. We got less food to eat and there were too many people there but it wasn't a big change for us like for people who came from outside.

Newcomers accustomed to a higher standard of living were shocked at conditions at the settlement. John Egan, who arrived there from Northam in 1933, was dismayed to find that he had "no house to live in" and that the food was "no good at all. It wasn't fit for a dog to eat."
Of the 500 inmates at the settlement in 1933, one-third were children and young people in the compound and the remainder were adults in the camp. Due to the decline in demand for Moore River trainees, there was little flow of young people out of the settlement, while the actions of the Department in forcing Aborigines into Moore river meant a sustained increase in the inmate population. Severe flooding and the growing rabbit plague destroyed several crops during the early 1930s and this added to problems at the settlement. The ration scale was reduced in November 1930 following the reduction in the Department's annual grant, despite objections from the inmates, and in 1933 further economies were made by stopping the issue of rations to families and cooking all food for the camp residents at a central "cook house" instead. Meals were doled out three times a day and the food was invariably cold by the time the Aborigines returned to their camps.

The health of the residents deteriorated and epidemics of influenza, scabies and sores ran through the compound and the camp. In 1931 there were nine deaths at the settlement; two years later there were twenty. The 1933 figures included nine children. The State Psychologist, Dr E.T. Stoneman, stated in 1934 that during her inspections of children in the compound she had found a high incidence of dwarfism, precocious and delayed puberty, endocrine imbalance, hypothyroidism, disorders of the alimentary system, skin disease, naso-pharyngial disease and malnutrition. She claimed that many of these physical defects were preventable given a well chosen diet, adequate washing and toilet facilities, and training in personal hygiene.

The conditions at the settlement and the Aborigines' enforced idleness led to a rapid increase in the rate of absconding during
the early 1930s. Escapes were frequently in the nature of elopements as young couples, prevented from developing their relationships by the settlement staff or the intervention of Neville, ran off to try to find a life together on the outside. In 1932 alone twenty young women and eight young men ran away from the settlement. One young woman made seven bids to escape, despite the harsh punishments administered by the settlement trackers after they returned her to the settlement.85 Such "recalcitrant" young women were eventually turned out of the compound and left to fend for themselves in the camp while the young men were expelled from the settlement altogether for repeated escapes. In 1932, in an attempt to reduce the rate of absconding, Neville had the area surrounding the settlement declared a prohibited area for Aborigines under the 1905 Aborigines Act.86 Henceforth, instead of facing punishment from the settlement staff and trackers, absconders faced up to six months' imprisonment. However, despite the subsequent imprisonment of several escapees, absconding continued. In 1936, at Neville's insistence, the camping area at Walebing was also declared a prohibited area as he was convinced that Aborigines there were encouraging young women to leave the settlement and harbouring them at their camps.87

At the same time growing numbers of young women were being sent back to the settlement from employment pregnant. In his 1931 Annual Report Neville disclosed that over the previous year thirty young women had been returned to the settlement pregnant. Most were pregnant to white men. Neville disingenuously explained that the young women were very innocent about sexual matters and they believed that babies "emanated from rocks" in accordance with the traditional Aboriginal view. This explanation suggested that the young women received little in the way of sexual education during their training
in the compound. However, there were certainly other more cogent reasons. Evidence given by Mrs E.C. Mitchell, formerly Matron at Moore River and Carrolup Settlements, to the Moseley Royal Commission in 1934 suggests that some young women became pregnant deliberately in order to be able to rejoin their young men at the settlement in the face of Neville's opposition to the match. One such young woman told Mrs Mitchell that she had kept herself "respectable" but

...the better you [were] to the department
the worse you [were] treated. This is the second time I've asked to permission to marry
my boy. I know what to do. I will go to
the settlement and I'll have a cause.

The loneliness of young women in domestic employment, together with the often unscrupulous attitude of white men to Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal women were important factors. There is evidence in several personal letters intercepted by the settlement staff of young women entering in good faith into intimate relationships with seemingly respectable and well-intentioned white men, only to find themselves abandoned once they had fallen pregnant. Some of the young women subsequently learned that the men were married and that they had given them false names to protect themselves from any possible legal repercussions.

Neville expressed his outrage in his 1931 Annual Report at the Department's inability under the existing legislation to prosecute the men involved or to force them to contribute to the maintenance of their children. This prompted an outcry in the Perth press. The Mirror carried the headline "They call them white men! Twenty two Skunks who Betrayed Native Girls" and demanded the immediate introduction of legislation to enable the Department to take action against the men involved.
Children at Moore River Native Settlement, early 1930s
Matron and Babies,
Moore River Native Settlement, early 1930s
**Public Debate on Aboriginal Issues**

The "Aboriginal problem" finally emerged as an issue in Western Australia during the early 1930s in response to reports of the desperate situation of part-Aborigines in the south and strongly worded allegations of slavery in the pastoral industry and government neglect of Aborigines in the north. There was little enlightened public debate: little notice was taken of ideas emanating from eastern Australia and initiatives taken to develop public awareness of the need to re-examine existing protectionist policies, particularly as they related to part-Aborigines, and to open up discussion on the future place of part-Aborigines in the Western Australian community were disrupted by the acrimonious debate which erupted over the allegations relating to the treatment of Aborigines in the north. The publicity which these allegations received in Britain, the eastern states and Western Australia, together with growing dissatisfaction locally with the government's failure to deal effectively with the situation of part-Aborigines in the south, precipitated the appointment of the Moseley Royal Commission in 1934.

Neville initially welcomed this interest in Aboriginal affairs, seeing it as a catalyst which could lead to the re-introduction of the 1929 Aborigines Act Amendment Bill to Parliament and to improvements in the funding and operation of his Department. As has been discussed, he actively sought during the early 1930s to arouse public concern about the situation of part-Aborigines in the south and to promote the policy of biological assimilation. In his Annual Reports and in public lectures and articles in the Perth press he stressed the rapid increase in the size of the part-Aboriginal population and their economic difficulties and warned of the "menace" they would represent to future generations of white Australians if immediate
steps were not taken to grant his Department the powers to deal effectively with the "problem". As a recognised "expert" on Aboriginal affairs, Neville initially dominated discussion on Aboriginal issues and his promotion to the position of Assistant Under Secretary to the Chief Secretary in 1933 (held jointly with that of Chief Protector of Aborigines) further consolidated his position and added to his sphere of influence within the public service hierarchy.* However, his authority was progressively eroded as both he and the Department attracted increasing public criticism and he was forced into the position of defending the actions of his Department and his own policies.

Between 1930 and 1934 some 600 articles and letters relating to Aborigines appeared in the Perth press91 while between June and August in 1933 alone, the government received 150 representations pertaining to the situation of part-Aborigines in the south from members of the general public and organisations representing white interests in the area.92 In relation to tribal Aborigines of the full descent in the north, most correspondents expressed the well-worn view that they were "doomed to extinction" and that they should be segregated on hunting reserves where they could live out their remaining years free from the deleterious effects of "civilisation". Many correspondents expressed deep concern at the plight of part-Aborigines in the south. Alarmed at the prospect of continued widespread economic dependency of part-Aborigines on the government, some recommended the introduction of segregated educational programmes for part-Aboriginal children aimed at developing vocational skills, thereby improving their chances

* Neville's promotion also gave him greater access to funding from the Lotteries Commission and during the early 1930s a number of minor projects at Moore River settlement were funded from this source.
of finding employment in the future. However, few could see any further than improved welfare services, increased legislative control and the greater segregation of part-Aborigines from the community. As has been indicated, the major point of discussion in relation to segregation was whether part-Aborigines should be totally isolated from the community in centralised settlements or whether they should be placed in "district depots" where they could find employment with local farmers but otherwise be kept strictly segregated from the wider community. There was little concern about the future of these segregated communities and the possible repercussions for the wider community given a continued rapid increase in the part-Aboriginal population. Instead there was general agreement that part-Aborigines were physically and intellectually incapable of living successfully in the wider community and that segregation would benefit both part-Aborigines and the wider community. Meanwhile the few letters to the press from Aborigines during the early 1930s objected strongly to any notion of enforced segregation and the Aborigines asked simply to be left alone to live their lives free from the constraints imposed on them because of their colour.

However there was some more enlightened discussion which drew some of its inspiration from ideas being discussed in the eastern states, as outlined in the previous chapter. Neville's publicisation of the need for a new policy for part-Aborigines and the deteriorating conditions of part-Aborigines in the south influenced a group of professional men in Perth to form the Australian Aborigines Amelioration Association in October 1932. This was the only organisation to emerge in Western Australia in response to the Aboriginal "problem" during the early 1930s. Paul Hasluck, a foundation member of the Four A's, as it became known, recalls that the Association
membership included "a few compassionate individuals who had been
aroused by one experience or another". Amongst them were some
of his journalist colleagues from the *West Australian* and several
clergymen. Hasluck himself had developed an antiquarian interest
in Aboriginal traditions and history during the 1920s and, recently
returned to Perth from London where he had devoted some time to work
with London slum dwellers, had "started to look for social disadvant-
age" and found it "right in the middle of a congenial hobby". The Association adopted as its formal aims "the preservation
and the development of the native races and their protection from
injury, cruelty and injustice" and it endeavoured to cooperate with
the Department, boards of missions and other relevant organisations
in other states to "arouse public opinion to its responsibility to
the Aborigines". To this end a number of articles were published
in the *West Australian* during the early 1930s by members of the
Association (most notably Paul Hasluck) calling for more research
into living conditions of Aborigines in the state and drawing
attention to the need to reassess policies and ideas about the future
relationship between Aborigines and the wider community. One article
calling for "a new public opinion" optimistically pointed to a future
time when "the man and woman in the street" would come to look upon
Aborigines as "fellow human beings". Nevertheless the stated views
of the Association in relation to Aboriginal policy remained
essentially segregationalist: the "amelioration" of the Aborigines' situation was to be achieved by "keeping them from towns" and by
making "life better for them by measures for health, education,
housing and opportunities for employment". The Association
distinguished in its policies between Aborigines of the full descent
and part-Aborigines and this reflected trends in the eastern states
towards the development of policies specifically designed to meet the needs of these two categories. The fate of Aborigines of the full descent in northern Australia was to be permanent segregation on large hunting reserves and mission stations while part-Aborigines were to be educated and trained in isolation from their Aboriginal background and then channelled back into the wider community. Ultimately all part-Aborigines would be assimilated into the general Australian community.

These views and the recommendations of a deputation of Association members to the Honorary Minister, W.H. Kitson, in May 1933 also suggest the influence of Neville and, indeed there was initially a degree of cooperation between Neville and the Association, and a good deal of contact between Neville and Hasluck in particular. The deputation's recommendations included: the establishment of a mission settlement in the south; the introduction of amendments to the 1905 Aborigines Act to make it more relevant to the part-Aboriginal population; the granting of powers to the Department to compel Aborigines to undergo medical examination and treatment; the establishment of separate hospital facilities for Aborigines and segregated schools for their children. In August 1933, in response to the events at Wagin discussed earlier, the Association again called for the introduction of vocational training for part-Aboriginal children and recommended that "suitable" part-Aboriginal children be admitted to state schools. In its self appointed role of "watchdog and critic of any official errors or shortcomings" the Association drew attention to conditions at Moore River settlement and in the town camps and to the Department's inadequate levels of funding. It was also critical of the system of using police as protectors of Aborigines and the broad range of powers already granted to the
Chief Protector of Aborigines. These criticisms formed the basis of an eventual rift between Neville and the Association.

Although Neville failed to generate public support for the policy of biological assimilation, a number of members of the medical profession in Perth spoke out in support of this policy during the early 1930s. A letter by "Physicus" in the West Australian in 1933, while rejecting the notion of miscegenation incorporated in Neville's ideas, advocated the "mating of half-caste with the quadroon and the octaroon so that the continued infiltration of white blood would finally stamp out the black colour". The writer discounted any opposition to the concept of marriage of part-Aborigines "to order" on the grounds that "love, as we know it, does not animate the breasts of the blacks of Australia". Dr Cecil Bryan told the Moseley Royal Commission in 1934 that segregation alone would not solve the "problem" posed by the increasing part Aboriginal population and, looking to the future, warned that the presence of a large distinctive coloured population in "White Australia" would not be tolerated and that it could precipitate racial violence. He objected to marriages between "half-castes" on the grounds that this would perpetuate the coloured race and the innate characteristics of "half-castes" (including their "sullen anger" at their rejection by the wider community) and he urged that male and female "half-castes" be kept separate from each other and placed in close proximity with lighter skinned members of the opposite sex instead. Their "mating" (Bryan's use of this term rather than "marriage" reflected his own implicit views that part-Aborigines were closer to animals than to humans in the scale of things) should be strictly controlled by the Chief Protector of Aborigines to ensure the gradual breeding out of "colour". Bryan was also opposed to sexual relations between Aborigines of the full
descent and whites, claiming that according to the Mendelian law of genetic inheritance, unions between such couples over time would lead to a birth ratio of one black child, one near white child and two children of intermediary colour. He refused to make a definitive opinion on the effects of intermarriage between part-Aborigines and whites but suggested that the attraction of white men for part-Aboriginal women would prove "strong and inevitable". He was less optimistic than Neville about the impossibility of "throwbacks" in such unions, although he suggested that quoted examples of this could be due to covert sexual relations between lighter women and dark men.\textsuperscript{102} It is sobering to recall that these comments were made authoritatively on the basis of supposed scientific evidence at a public hearing in Perth only fifty years ago and that such views, particularly the "throwback" idea, are still commonly held.

The plight of part-Aborigines in the south also aroused the concern of a number of women's organisations in Perth and the country areas of the south. The most notable was the Womens' Service Guild of Western Australia. The Guild was the local branch of the Australian Federation of Women Voters which was directly affiliated with the British Commonwealth League, an organisation dedicated to improving the situation of the "less forward races" of the British Commonwealth. The Guild also had links with the United Aborigines Mission (UAM) and in 1930 adopted a resolution passed by the UAM in the previous year recommending the establishment of localised mission-run farming settlements on large reserves for Aborigines in southern rural areas.\textsuperscript{103} The Guild was committed to improving the situation of Aboriginal women in the state and pressed for the introduction of greater legislative controls to provide for their "protection", particularly from sexual abuse by white men and
through traditional Aboriginal practices. The Guild also advocated Federal control of Aboriginal affairs, maintaining that when the Federal government ratified the Covenant of the League of Nations in 1925 it undertook to fully provide and care for the indigenous people of Australia. In July 1930 a deputation of the Women's Service Guild waited on the Honorary Minister, W.H. Kitson, recommending, amongst other matters, the immediate transfer of control of Aboriginal affairs to the Federal government. In the interim the West Australian government should re-introduce the 1929 Aborigines Act Amendment Bill in order to provide greater legal protection for Aboriginal women and steps should be taken to reopen Carrolup settlement to relieve the plight of Aborigines in the south.

In December 1931 members of the Guild were addressed by a forceful speaker, Mary Montgomery Bennett, who urged them to continue their efforts on behalf of Aborigines. Mary Bennett, who was to play a major role in events leading up to the appointment of the Moseley Royal Commission in 1934, was an unlikely candidate for the role of agitator. A "cultivated middle-aged woman of artistic tastes" she was the daughter of a Scottish pioneer pastoralist in Queensland (whose life she recorded in her first publication, Christenson of Lammermoor). Her husband was a captain of the P. & O. line. During the 1920s, Mary Bennett returned to live in "good society" in England where she came under the influence of new ideas including feminism while also keeping in touch with events in Western Australia. In 1930, while still in England, she published The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being, in which she alleged that Aborigines were employed under conditions akin to slavery in the pastoral industry in northern Australia and urged the immediate transfer of the control of Aboriginal affairs from the states to the Federal government. The
book attracted little attention in Western Australia, although an article in a local newspaper entitled "System of Slavery" made brief reference to the allegations of slavery and to her criticisms of the role of the police in the Northern Territory in supporting the system of employment of Aborigines. 108

Soon after the publication of the book, Mary Bennett returned to Australia and became Matron at the Forrest River Mission, travelling through adjacent parts of the Kimberley and Northern Territory visiting missions and pastoral stations. She also travelled to the south of the state and worked for a short period at the UAM mission at Gnowangerup. In 1932 she was appointed teacher at the UAM mission at Mount Margaret in the goldfields. There she came under the influence of Reverend Ronald Schenk and his policy of vocational training for Aboriginal children.

Mary Bennett's observations in the north served to confirm the views expressed in her 1930 publication. She found the generally accepted ways of treating Aborigines there, especially the methods of the police and employers, profoundly shocking and her strong feminist views were affronted by the treatment of Aboriginal women both in the traditional setting and in their relations with white men. Many of the missionaries with whom she spoke, particularly those attached to the UAM, had clashed at some time with Neville and were highly critical of government policy and Neville's administration. She also joined with missionaries such as Reverend R. Schenk of Mount Margaret Mission in criticising anthropologists for encouraging Aborigines to maintain traditional practices which the missionaries considered "harmful" and distasteful and which also impeded their work of "Christianising and civilising".
In May 1932 Mary Bennett made several serious allegations concerning the treatment of Aborigines in the north of the state based on her observations and information gleaned from documents such as the 1905 Roth Report in a letter printed in the *Australian Board of Missions Review*. She renewed her allegations of slavery and forced labour in the pastoral industry and accused Aboriginal and white men of involving Aboriginal women in a widespread system of concubinage. Like the anthropologist, Ralph Piddington, who, as has been discussed, had made similar allegations in the previous year, Mary Bennett laid the blame directly on the government. She maintained that legal protection for Aboriginal women was inadequate and that the area of land set aside for Aboriginal reserves was insufficient, consisting largely of "waterless wastes". She also criticised the government for failing to suppress traditional practices such as infant betrothal, child marriage and polygamy. She concluded by demanding a range of reforms which would "implement an honourable native policy in Australia".109

This letter prompted an immediate response from Neville. In a letter to the *West Australian* in May he refuted her claims of slavery in the north, explaining that payment in kind was the accepted practice in the Kimberleys, and he stated that his Department, like administrations in other states, was loath to interfere in the traditional practices of Aborigines. He added that while the Department lacked the power to deal effectively with miscegenation, it was doing its utmost to prevent the practice and that the area of Aboriginal reserve land in Western Australia (some 23,500 acres) compared favourably with that in other states.110 The article clearly expressed Neville's outrage at Mary Bennett's outspoken criticisms and he publicly accused her of exaggeration of the facts. Neville
and Mary Bennett were to become bitter enemies and Neville later described her writings as "a campaign of misrepresentation" against the government and his Department.

Neville's article was followed by a spate of letters to the press from missionaries, pastoralists, government officers and residents of northern towns; they either strongly disputed or totally supported Mary Bennett's allegations. This cut across the atmosphere of rational debate which the Four A's had hoped to create, and Hasluck (1977) recalls that discussion descended into the

...customary unintelligent debate in which some people were only finding fault and other people were only offering excuses....As usual, when one side lays blame and the other side is concerned with escaping blame, there was more argument than enlightenment and a great shortage of information.

Many of Mary Bennett's opponents chose to question the validity of her information, pointing out that the material from the Roth Royal Commission was almost thirty years out of date. There is little doubt that, in the main, Mary Bennett's statements were correct. Evidence presented to the Moseley Royal Commission in 1934 suggests that conditions for Aborigines in the north had changed little since 1905 and many of her allegations simply referred to generally accepted (although often covert) practices in the north. However, describing these practices in print and labelling them with such emotive words as "slavery" and "white slave traffic in black women" was distinctly provocative. This was the power of Mary Bennett's writing in the early 1930s. Set against the background of growing public interest in the Aboriginal question and state and Commonwealth government sensitivity to international opinion on the treatment of Aborigines, it was inevitable that Mary Bennett's campaign would have a strong impact on events in Western Australia.
After this outburst of "verbal warfare", Neville deliberately avoided responding to any further criticisms of his Department in an effort to prevent further publicisation of Mary Bennett's allegations. When the Secretary of the Country Women's Association approached Neville in July 1932 requesting his views on present and future policies relating to Aborigines and drawing his attention to issues raised by Mary Bennett during her address to the Women's Service Guild in the previous year, he invited a representative of the organisation to visit his office. Presumably he considered that a personal exchange would enable him to impress his views more effectively than a written communication. Meanwhile, further outspoken criticisms of the Department in the press were responded to by Neville in carefully worded and guarded statements.

However, Mary Bennett continued her attacks, undaunted by the vitriolic criticism she had aroused. In June 1933 she played her trump card. Through her contacts in Britain and the Women's Service Guild in Perth she arranged to have a paper read on her behalf by Ruby Rich of Sydney* at the Conference of the British Commonwealth League in London. In her usual pugnacious style she alleged that the major cause of the Aborigines' low social and economic status lay in the "victimisation" of Aboriginal women. In the "wild state" they suffered from the traditional practices of their men and those in touch with whites were even worse off. The "concubinage" of

* In 1932 Ruby Rich delivered a paper to the Conference of the British Commonwealth League in which she also demanded greater protection for Aboriginal women. Debate at this Conference also defended the right of American blacks and whites to marry and refuted claims that such marriages led to offspring who inherited the worst of both races on the grounds that they were postulating "an obvious biological impossibility". Such enlightened views were far in advance of public attitudes in Western Australia (WA 10/6/1932).
Aboriginal women, she alleged, was "ubiquitous" in the north of Western Australia: they were traded by their men to white men for food, tobacco and alcohol, and this was tolerated and even condoned by the police who often kept Aboriginal women for their own sexual use. Mary Bennett accused the administration of failing to prevent this and of protecting traditional practices which led to the "victimisation" of Aboriginal women. She also drew attention to the associated increase in the part-Aboriginal population in the north and the removal of part-Aboriginal children from their mothers to Departmental institutions. Mary Bennett claimed that this was adversely affecting the "mental stability" of both the mothers and the children. In conclusion, the paper urged the introduction of greater legal protection for Aboriginal women, the segregation of Aborigines in the north on large mission-supervised reserves where they could live free from the "contaminating" influences of white society, and the provision of improved welfare services to Aborigines in the state. The paper was followed by a two day debate at the Conference resulting in the passing of a resolution urging women's organisations in Australia to

...continue in directing the attention of the government to conditions akin to slavery under which detribalised aborigines and half-castes live, including infant betrothal, natives lending wives in exchange for material gain, and the marriage of polygamous husbands to girls who were sometimes Christians.113

Mrs Bennett's paper created a furore in Western Australia. It was widely reported in the Perth press and the Daily News published excerpts under the heading "Natives are virtually Slaves". Neville could not afford to overlook the allegations and again he prepared a statement disputing the claims.114 Mary Bennett, however, simply
repeated her charges and five days after the publication of Neville's statement succeeded in having the full text of her paper published in the Daily News.

The Government Response

The West Australian government could not afford to allow this situation of open confrontation to continue. Mrs Bennett's allegations were extremely embarrassing given the current of international concern about the treatment of indigenous peoples. The state government was also particularly sensitive about its reputation in Britain as in April 1933 it had presented a submission to the British government seeking permission to secede from the Australian Commonwealth. However Mrs Bennett's allegations were not the only source of concern for the government. Representatives of prominent national humanitarian groups such as Dr H. Base Dow of the Aborigines' Friends Association (formed in Adelaide in 1858) were also expressing concern at the sexual abuse of Aboriginal women in the north of the state. At the same time allegations appeared in the Los Angeles Times that cannibalism was practiced amongst Aborigines in the north of Western Australia and that this was condoned by the government. Meanwhile, Donald MacKay of the MacKay Aerial Expedition which visited the north in the early 1930s told the London Daily Herald that "atrocities worse than Germans" were being perpetrated against Aborigines in the north.

* The secession movement began in 1926 with the establishment of the short-lived Secession League in Perth. In May 1930 the movement was reformed as the Dominion League of Western Australia and its members called for an immediate referendum to assess public opinion on the subject. A referendum was subsequently held on the same day as the 1933 elections and resulted in a two to one vote for the state to withdraw from the Australian Commonwealth. However a British House of Commons joint committee rejected the submission on the ground that Australia had no right to request legislation on the Australian Constitution and the matter lapsed (W.A. Newspapers, n.d.).
the part-Aboriginal "problem" in the south and anger at the govern-
ment's failure to deal effectively with the situation were also
increasing in the Western Australian community, and the publication
of a letter by R.L. Spencer, a well known and respected settler in
the Kojonup district, in a British newspaper in August 1933 condemning
the conditions in which part-Aborigines were forced to live was a
further source of embarrassment to the Western Australian government.\footnote{120}

Nor could the government ignore the outburst which followed its
refusal to exclude part-Aboriginal children from state schools and
the growing evidence that time for a review of government policy
in relation to part-Aborigines was long overdue.

In August 1933 Cabinet approved the introduction of a revised
version of the 1929 Aborigines Act Amendment Bill to Parliament.
(Neville later stated that several unpopular provisions in the
original Bill were deleted to ensure the passage of the Bill through
both Houses of Parliament.)\footnote{121} However, before the Bill could be
introduced, A.A.M. Coverley (Labor, Kimberley) moved a motion in
the Legislative Assembly for the appointment of a Royal Commission
to enquire into "allegations of the maltreatment of Aborigines
generally (including that recently instanced through the columns
of the Press), the Aborigines Act, and the administration of the
Aborigines Department generally". Coverley asserted that such an
inquiry would serve to "have the names of the residents of the north
cleared from stigma".\footnote{122} F.J. Wise (Labor, Gascoyne), in seconding
the motion, recommended that the inquiry also look into the "half-
caste problem" in the south with the view to developing an appropriate
government policy. He went on to suggest that the policies of
segregation and absorption needed to be closely examined to determine
whether they, or other policies, were best suited to dealing with
Mr. H. D. MOSELEY.

H.D. Moseley, who conducted the Moseley Royal Commission into Aboriginal conditions in Western Australia in 1934
the "problem" in the south. 123

There was strong support for the motion from both sides of the House. Premier Collier stated that a Royal Commission would clear up "doubts" and "suppositions" about the state's reputation and assured members that his government would fully support a Royal Commission. 124 The Leader of the Opposition, C. Latham, described the government's critics as "scandalmongers" who wrote "derogatory articles for the sake of personal publicity" and recommended the introduction of a policy of "breeding out" part-Aborigines in the south. His only objection to the Royal Commission was that the expenditure incurred could be better spent on relieving the plight of white unemployed in the state. 125

The motion was passed unanimously in December 1933 and in January 1934 the government announced the appointment of a Royal Commission to "investigate, report and advise upon matters in relation to the condition and treatment of Aborigines". 126 Henry Doyle Moseley, a "decent, experienced, unimaginative" Perth stipendiary magistrate was appointed as Royal Commissioner. 127 Moseley had previous experience in conducting Royal Commissions, including a Royal Commission into the administration of state psychiatric hospitals, 128 however, his knowledge of Aboriginal affairs was limited to contacts with Aborigines in Court both in Perth and in his previous magisterial appointments at Carnarvon and Moora. Moseley was certainly not of the same calibre as Koth who had extensive experience in the administration of Aboriginal affairs and a sound background in ethnological research.

Neville appeared to welcome the appointment of the Royal Commission, despite the possibility of criticism of his Department, seeing it as a prelude to the introduction of the policies he had
been advocating for several years and improvements in the operation of his Department. His conduct during the hearings of the Royal Commission suggests that he was confident that his views would prevail over those of his critics. However, he appeared to have little regard for Moseley's abilities as Commissioner and this was evidenced in his frequent interjections during the hearings of the Royal Commission and his cross-examination of witnesses, apparently without prior consultation with the Commissioner.

The members of the Australian Aborigines Amelioration Association supported the appointment of the Royal Commission and Paul Hasluck responded by writing a series of articles in the West Australian intended to provide an historical perspective on existing government policies and practice in Aboriginal affairs and to prevent the Royal Commission from simply concerning itself with "present day wrongs and the answers to recent complaints". Hasluck concluded that there had been no policy of "planning a future for aborigines" but only concern with "making their lot easier and protecting them from some of the less pleasant phases of civilisation". It was evident that Aborigines were no longer "doomed to extinction" and that the time for a new and positive policy to "plan a future" for them was long overdue. He maintained that the details of such a policy could only be decided after comprehensive research into the Aborigines' "distribution, their present conditions, their capability, and the best method of helping them" and when the government had made it clear how much it was prepared to spend on Aboriginal affairs. One result of these articles was that Hasluck was invited to accompany the Royal Commissioner on his tour of the north as a representative of the West Australian newspaper.
The government's decision to appoint a Royal Commission did little to staunch the flow of Mary Bennett's criticisms. In a statement to the West Australian late in December, Mary Bennett questioned the effectiveness of Royal Commissions generally and pointed to the state government's failure to fully implement the recommendations of the 1905 Roth Royal Commission. In the same month she repeated her earlier allegations in addresses to the Women's Service Guild and the Women's Temperance Union and urged the women to lobby the state and Federal governments to make Aboriginal affairs a Federal responsibility. As a consequence, the Women's Service Guild and the Women's Temperance Union lobbied the Western Australian Premier and the Prime Minister requesting the introduction of Federal control. At the same time Mary Bennett broadened her criticisms of the situation of part-Aborigines in the south. She publicly criticised the system of sending young women out to service from Moore River settlement, stating that the women were unhappy and lonely in their jobs and were frequently poorly treated by their employers. As proof of this she referred to Neville's statement in 1931 that thirty young women sent out to service during the year had been returned to the Department pregnant. This infuriated Neville and he attempted to discredit her argument by informing his Minister, W.H. Kitson, that her criticism was "robbed of its importance because of its exaggeration and inaccuracy", despite the fact that the figures were taken directly from his own 1931 Annual Report. In a further statement in December, Mary Bennett urged the government to set aside four thousand acres of land in the Gnawangerup district for the establishment of a "native village" where Aborigines, under the supervision of UAM missionaries, could farm the land and thereby become self-supporting. Following the announcement of the appoint-
ment of the Royal Commission Mary Bennett actively encouraged Aborigines in the south to present submissions to the Commissioner and assisted them in the preparation of their submissions. She was herself to be a major witness at the hearings of the Royal Commission. Mary Bennett also continued her attacks on the government at the international level. In June 1934 in a further paper read on her behalf by Ruby Rich to the British Commonwealth League, she drew attention to the fact that the majority of Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children in Western Australia were growing up without the benefit of a normal education and accused the government of neglecting its responsibilities in this area. Drawing on her own experience as a teacher at Mount Margaret Mission and research by Ralph Piddington into the intelligence levels of Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children, referred to in the previous chapter, she refuted claims by authoritix that these children were incapable of learning and asserted that "the Australian natives [could] achieve anything that we [could] achieve". She also repeated her criticisms of the government's policy of removing children from their parents and recommended instead that the families be allowed to live together on large reserves where the children could attend their own schools. With the catch-cry of "education is earning power" she concluded that through education, Aborigines would be able to "raise themselves" and to develop their own separate self-supporting communities.135

The Moseley Royal Commission

The terms of reference of the Royal Commission were broad. The Commissioner was to investigate, report and advise on the social and economic conditions of Aborigines and persons of part-Aboriginal descent with special reference to: the categories of persons of
Aboriginal descent who should be included and excluded from Aboriginal camps; the proximity of Aboriginal camps to towns; conditions of Aboriginal health; the government settlements; missions; the employment of Aborigines; and the trial of Aboriginal offenders. The Commission was also to inquire into laws relating to persons of part-Aboriginal descent, to recommend possible changes to existing legislation and the administration of the Aborigines Department and to investigate allegations in the press relating to the "ill-treatment" of Aborigines in Western Australia.

Moseley travelled some 14,000 miles throughout the state collecting evidence and for the first time in the state's history, a government inquiry into Aboriginal affairs visited towns in the south west. It was also the first time that Aborigines from various parts of the state, including the south west, played a significant role in providing evidence to a Royal Commission. While representatives of all organisations involved in the events leading up to the Royal Commission presented evidence to Moseley, the major participants were Chief Protector Neville and Mary Bennett.

Neville told the Commission that the major problem facing his Department was the part-Aboriginal population in the south. He repeated his earlier statements regarding the increase in the population, living conditions in the town camps and the possible consequences for the community if strong action were not taken to deal with the situation. He stated that his Department had a "complete policy" in relation to part-Aborigines but lacked the legislative power to implement it and he recommended the immediate introduction of legislation along the lines of the 1929 Aborigines Act Amendment Bill. (Neville made no specific reference to the policy of biological assimilation; this was probably in recognition of the
lack of widespread community support for this policy and Moseley's own opposition to it, as inferred in his Report. Neville maintained that part-Aborigines would have no objection to coming under this legislation if the term "Aboriginal" used in the 1905 Act were changed to "native". Neville also recommended the immediate reopening of Carrolup, the establishment of a further settlement in the eastern wheatbelt and the development of a settlement on the Tone River in the far southwest along the lines of Palm Island in Queensland for the detention of "racalcitrant" Aborigines. At present such persons were accommodated at Moore River settlement but in future they should be excluded from settlements intended for the general Aboriginal community. Neville admitted that Moore River settlement was not "ideal" and that lack of accommodation prevented it from achieving its aims. Nevertheless he maintained that the settlement was turning "a lot of raw material...into something a little better" and that it was providing the young people with training which enabled them to earn their own living outside the settlement.

Neville also pointed to the low levels of funding which hindered the work of his Department. Referring to the Department's existing substantial earning power from its cattle stations in the north, charges for permits and agreements to employ Aborigines and the investment of wages of Aboriginal employees, he recommended that the Department be changed from a "charitable" organisation to one where Aborigines, through their work in the community and in the settlements, would contribute to the costs of the operation of the Department and thereby to the support of persons of Aboriginal descent throughout the state. Neville stated that this would require an initial large investment on the part of the government, but he suggested several
measures which would have the immediate effect of relieving the Department of some of its financial commitments while also serving to generate revenue. He had already suggested these on several previous occasions: the broadening of the definition of employment to include contract workers (thereby increasing Departmental revenue from permit fees); the establishment of a medical fund along the lines of that operating in the Northern Territory to which all employers of Aborigines were obliged by law to make a set annual contribution; the granting of power to the Department to place all unclaimed wages due to Aboriginal workers and unclaimed estates of deceased Aborigines in its Trust Fund to be used for the "general benefit" of Aborigines.

In relation to the Department, Neville suggested that it be renamed the Department of Native Affairs and that his title be changed to that of Commissioner of Native Affairs. This was in keeping with other administrations working with indigenous people both in Australia and overseas and it would remove the "odium" under which the officers of his Department currently worked. Neville was also critical of the system of using police as protectors of Aborigines. He stated that the dual role of the police as prosecutors and protectors acted to the disadvantage of the Aborigines, the police and his Department and he acknowledged that there had been instances of police officers using their broad powers to intimidate Aborigines and manipulating the ration system to control Aborigines in their districts. Although he had recommended the introduction of training for police working with Aborigines this had not eventuated and many police remained unaware of their duties under the 1905 Aborigines Act. The police were also under no obligations to carry out his directions and on occasion they failed to do so and Neville suggested that remuneration
for duties carried out on behalf of the Aborigines Department could provide an incentive for them to do so. Neville also suggested a number of administrative changes which could serve to increase the Department's supervision and control over police officers and the treatment of Aborigines at the local level generally. These included the appointment of Travelling Inspectors attached to the Aborigines Department to mediate between the police and the Commissioner, the appointment of a Deputy Commissioner in the north of the state, and the appointment of District Commissioners in the Kimberley, northwest, Murchison, Gascoyne and Goldfields districts. Neville stated that he himself could maintain sole responsibility for the south west of the state. The Deputy and District Commissioners would be directly responsible to the Commissioner of Native Affairs.

Neville also made a number of recommendations intended to increase Departmental control over certain Aboriginal traditions. These included the establishment of Native Courts for the hearing of cases involving offences committed by Aborigines against each other under customary law and the granting of power to the Department to intervene to prevent polygamous marriages and infant betrothal.

Mary Bennett faced gruelling cross-examination from both Moseley and Neville in giving evidence to the Royal Commission and Neville accused her openly of basing her statements on "native evidence" and "hearsay" and took pains to point out inconsistencies in her evidence. She repeated her allegations of abuse of Aboriginal women and slavery in the north and her criticisms of the Department and the police. She also condemned the unequal treatment of Aborigines before the courts alleging that the police frequently faked evidence to gain convictions of Aborigines and that admissions of guilt were falsely obtained. Aboriginal women were also forced to give evidence
against their husbands, contrary to the provisions of the Criminal Code. Aborigines were not provided with legal defence and courts were frequently presided over by justices of the peace who were ignorant of the law and who had a personal interest in the cases before them. Like Neville, she recommended the establishment of Native Courts for offences involving Aboriginal parties only and further stated that police should be replaced as local protectors by missionaries or government officers responsible to the Aborigines Department.

Mary Bennett was highly critical of the treatment of part-Aborigines in the south. In contrast to most of her contemporaries, she recommended that they should be freed from the control of the Aborigines Department and placed under the same laws as members of the white community. To support her argument she read from a letter written by Norman Harris who had taken part in the 1928 deputation to the Premier. He wrote that under the Aborigines Act every part-Aboriginal was

...a prisoner in his own country. Any police officer can come along and take our children at any time and we cannot object or we are committing an offence under the Act. A police officer deeming us to come under section 3 can send us off. If we refuse to go, we are forced to a settlement under clause 55 and can be kept there under clause 12. In many cases death alone ends our term of duress.

She also condemned conditions at Moore River settlement and the system of "official smashing up of family life" through the removal of children and families to the settlement. She alleged that conditions at the settlement were deplorable: the diet was inadequate and inmates were imprisoned in the "Boob" for refusing to work or absconding and no record was kept of their terms of imprisonment.
Each "prisoner" was allowed one blanket and was obliged to sleep on the floor. They saw only their fellow prisoners and the trackers who stood over them while they carried out their sanitary bins from the "Boob" and dug a hole alongside the "Boob" to bury the contents. She also repeated her criticisms of the system of sending young women out to domestic service from the settlement and demanded that it be stopped. She condemned conditions in the town camps in the south and recommended that the reserves be closed. Rather than forcing the people into centralised government-run settlements the government should assist them to develop localised "village communities" in their home districts under the supervision of missionaries. (A similar recommendation was made by Brother and Sister Wright of the United Aborigines Mission in their recommendations to the Royal Commission.) These communities should be established on arable land under "A" class reserve conditions. There the people could earn a living farming the land and working for farmers in the area and their children could be educated. Such communities, she concluded, were "the heart of the matter" and the "only solution".

Aborigines who presented written or oral evidence to the Royal Commission included several individuals involved in the 1928 deputation to the Premier, together with people who had suffered at the hands of the Department during the Depression years. Several anonymous notes smuggled out of Moore River were also presented to the Commissioner. Although Neville scathingly referred to the Aborigines' evidence as "native evidence", a term intended to remind Moseley that their word should not be trusted, their statements were corroborated in most cases by the Commissioner's own observations during his tour of the south and Moore River settlement and by other white witnesses who appeared before the Commissioner. The Aboriginal
witnesses were particularly critical of the Department and Neville and the interference and control over their private lives. Norman Harris told the Royal Commission that it was "hard for anyone once grabbed by the Department to get away again. We are handicapped hand and foot". Several witnesses maintained that they did not even come under the Act but that they were nevertheless treated by the Department as if they did and this was forcing them out of a European lifestyle and into the town camps. The removal of their children was of particular concern: one man who stated that he did not come under the Act accused the police of trumping up charges to take his children from him and place them in Moore River settlement. The Department was also criticised for refusing to issue rations to men after they rejected employment found for them by the Department.

Moore River settlement took the brunt of their criticisms. Some witnesses complained that although they were willing and able to support their relatives they had nevertheless been taken from them and placed in the settlement. Others complained that they had been arrested by the local police and sent to Moore River under warrant without any warning or explanation as to why they were being sent there. One couple described how they and their five children were arrested at Mullewa in May 1930 on a warrant which bore the signatures of the Chief Protector and the Minister but which gave no reason for their arrest. When they asked the police why they were being sent to the settlement they were simply told that they had "done something" and the settlement Superintendent and Neville later refused to provide any explanation for their arrest. They stated that the police had come to their home and
...bundled us into the police car and didn't give us a chance to pack anything or have our tea....We arrived at Mingenew at sun-down and they let me go to the shop to get some fruit and then they drove us to the police station and wanted to lock us all up in a cell. The children were hanging around their father screaming and I rushed off to see if I could get help but...the policeman caught me and dragged me back to the cell...we kept telling the children not to be frightened and they quietened down after a time. About a quarter to ten they started to the station...we were told to get into the train and the policeman got in with us and sat up in the train with us until we got to Moogumber at daybreak next morning. 141

Aboriginal witnesses were also critical of conditions at the settlement and the treatment of Aborigines by the white staff. One man, a horse driver by trade and a member of the Australian Workers' Union who had sent his five sons to the settlement to be educated following the death of his wife, had found on visiting the settlement that his sons were receiving little education, they were covered in sores and scabs, their clothes were filthy and their diet inadequate. When he took them to a restaurant in Perth for a treat he found that they did not even know how to use a knife and fork. He subsequently removed his sons from the settlement and enrolled them at a state school in Perth. 142 The Superintendents and the Aboriginal trackers were singled out for their cruelty to the inmates and the Superintendent was accused of being frequently drunk. An anonymous letter from the settlement described how on one occasion the Superintendent had ordered the trackers to hold a group of girls down over sacks of flour while he beat them with a "big waddy"; the girls were so frightened that they urinated and the befouled flour was then used in food for the inmates. 143 Another anonymous note from young women in the compound stated that they had been
...really unhappy since these few years. We could not settle our mind in the settlement while the matrons here. We have promised Mr Kitson that we'd never run away. But we are sorry we have broken our promise to him. The reason why because the Matron is always slinging of at us and when we try to speak for our rights Mr Neal turn around and give us a hiding. And matron is at the bottom of it all. Just because she's sick of the place. She turn around and say she sick and tired of the girls. Then she wonder why we run away and is her driving us away.144

There were also complaints that Aborigines were denied permission to visit close relatives living at the settlement. One man was told by Neville that he could not visit his sister when she fell ill because he might run off with a young woman from the compound.145 Another man who had grown up at the settlement stated that he was expelled from Moore River after he ran away twice with young girls from the compound. He objected to this on the grounds that he had only known life at the settlement and found it hard to survive on the outside and all his friends and family were resident there and he could no longer see them.146

Most Aboriginal witnesses from the south indicated that they simply wanted to be left alone to run their own lives; they were of the opinion that they should not come under any special laws and should be allowed to live under the same conditions as members of the wider community. One woman recommended that they be given a greater say in decisions affecting their lives and that Aborigines be allowed to elect their own Parliamentary representative.147

Most of the white witnesses from the south (including representatives of town organisations, women's groups, the Australian Amelioration Association, missionaries and private individuals) were united only in their demands for the greater segregation of part-Aborigines
from the wider community and their greater "protection" and control. While many argued for the permanent segregation of part-Aborigines, others claimed that segregation should be simply a step in the process of cultural assimilation of part-Aborigines into the wider community. Some witnesses wanted Aborigines to be provided with decent facilities and education on reserves separated from the towns but accessible to local employers; others wanted the people moved out of their districts altogether and placed on centralised government settlements. Others argued for greater mission involvement in the south.

The Report of the Moseley Royal Commission

While the unpublished evidence of the Moseley Royal Commission provides a fascinating social document, Moseley's subsequent Report, tabled in Parliament in January 1935, was prosaic and pragmatic. Moseley in fact made little use of the evidence presented to him and he stated in his Report that, due to the contradictory nature of the points of view presented to him, he had chosen to base his recommendations on his own observations, claiming that he had learned more from "personal inspection and observation than from listening to views". The Report broke no new ground, either in its findings or its recommendations, and rather than providing new directions in policy it simply reiterated and accelerated existing policies of protection and segregation.

Moseley stated that he had found no evidence to substantiate allegations of ill-treatment of Aborigines, although he added that he was not "so foolish as to suggest that isolated cases of cruelty to natives [did] not exist". He had a narrow view of what constituted cruelty to Aborigines. Unlike Roth in 1905, Moseley raised no objections to the chaining of Aboriginal prisoners and
he observed that they seemed "perfectly comfortable in their chains, they had every freedom of movement, and apparently did not notice them". Nevertheless, to provide for the greater protection of "tribal" Aborigines in the north, Moseley recommended the establishment of several large inviolate reserves for their exclusive use.

Moseley recommended significant changes to the administration of the Aborigines Department. The system of a centralised administration in Perth relying on over-worked police and other protectors at the local level should be done away with and replaced by one based on the appointment of Divisional Protectors responsible to the Minister in charge of the Department. This would ensure that the duties of the Department were carried out more thoroughly than under the present system where protectors had "nothing to do with aborigines" apart from the signing of the occasional employment permit. It would also facilitate the development of regional policies suited to the needs of the different districts in the state. Moseley recommended that three such appointments be made immediately in the north of the state and that the Chief Protector be left to control matters in the goldfields and the south. He recognised that the system of honorary protectors would have to continue in some areas but advised that police officers should no longer be appointed to these positions. Moseley regarded these administrative changes as the essential element in his recommendations and stated that if the system continued as it was then his report was "valueless".

Moseley expressed concern at the high levels of mortality amongst the Aboriginal population throughout the state and the lack of proper hospital facilities for Aborigines. He recommended the establishment of several hospitals for Aborigines in the north and the provision of special accommodation for the medical and surgical treatment of
Aborigines in all areas with significant Aboriginal populations. He also supported the introduction of a Native Medical Fund, as suggested by Neville, and the granting of powers to Divisional Protectors to compel Aborigines to undergo medical examination and treatment, particularly in regard to venereal disease and leprosy in the north of the state.

Moseley recommended a range of amendments to the 1905 Aborigines Act, many of which closely followed those previously recommended by Neville. These included the extension of the definition of "half-caste" to include persons of Aboriginal descent "to a remote degree", however, contrary to Neville's intentions, Moseley advised that the Minister in charge of the Department, rather than the Chief Protector, be made the legal guardian of children of Aborigines. Moseley also recommended that the definition of "cohabitation" be broadened to include any act of sexual intercourse between Aborigines and non-Aborigines and the penalty increased to six months' imprisonment. This, he stated, would help to limit the increase in the part-Aboriginal population. He also recommended the establishment of "Native Courts" to hear offences arising out of "tribal custom" amongst "bush natives". These courts would have the power to inflict corporal punishment and to sentence serious offenders to island settlements which Moseley recommended for the incarceration of "delinquent natives".

Moseley described the "half-caste" as the "great problem confronting the community today". Although their numbers were increasing throughout the state, the problems lay largely in the south where the highest concentrations of part-Aborigines were to be found. He was disturbed at conditions in the town camps in the south, particularly the sight of children "so fair in complexion as to be
scarcely indistinguishable from white children" living in "abject squalor" and warned that if the children were not educated and provided with employment they would become a "positive menace to the community: the men useless and vicious, and the women a tribe of harlots." However Moseley was convinced that with sound administration and the injection of sufficient funding such a situation could be averted, in the south at least. He recommended that the presence of part-Aborigines around the towns be strictly controlled through the issue of passes by the Department and that the town camps be abolished altogether. However he advised against the breaking up of families in the camps on the grounds that the mothers had "a great love" for their children and proposed instead the establishment of "community settlements" on good land where the families could settle, the adults working on the land or for local farmers while the children lived in separate accommodation and were trained in rural work, hygiene and "other elementary principles of civilized life". The children should not be prevented from seeing their parents but should nevertheless be gradually weaned from the "aboriginal influence." This proposal reflected the ideas of missionaries from the United Aborigines Mission and Mary Bennett rather than Neville's plans for large centralised settlements in the south. Moseley was vague about the ultimate aim of the "community settlements"; while he did not specifically advocate permanent segregation he did say that the children's training was to enable them to take their place in "white civilisation" only "if necessary". In relation to the policy of biological assimilation Moseley commented that if "throwing people together" at the settlements led to their choosing partners of a lighter complexion, "well and good". However, he rejected the notion of interfering in the people's choice of
marriage partners. He also advised against the reopening of Carrolup settlement on the grounds that the land was unsuitable for farming, the available water brackish and local white residents were totally opposed to the idea.

Moseley was convinced that his "community settlements" would ensure a "good future" for part-Aborigines in the south and he seems to have overlooked any connection between his scheme and the Moore River settlement. Moseley was so shocked by his observations at the settlement during an unscheduled visit in April 1934* that he issued a special interim report drawing attention to the deplorable conditions there. He described it as a "woeful spectacle" which left "very much to be desired".154 The compound buildings were overcrowded and vermin-ridden, the church hall was inadequate as a schoolroom and, apart from their work in the sewing room, dormitories and staff quarters, the children were receiving no vocational training whatsoever. The children's diet lacked fresh fruit, vegetables, eggs and milk and this was seriously affecting their health. They were not provided with cutlery in the dining room and were locked up for the night in their dormitories. Nevertheless some girls managed to escape to the camp during the night and Moseley suggested that wire netting be placed on the dormitory windows to put a stop to this. The hospital had one ward for men and women, there were no labour or isolation wards and the single bathroom doubled as a surgery. Moseley described the detention of inmates in the "Boob"

* Funding was set aside by the Department to improve the appearance of the settlement in anticipation of the Commissioner's visit, but he arrived before the improvements were effected.
as "barbarous" and recommended that this practice be stopped immediately. He stated that the adults in the camp were leading an idle and useless life, exercising a bad influence on the children, and advised that they be moved away from the settlement altogether. He also considered the site of the settlement unsuitable and stated that it had no hope of becoming self-supporting without additional farming land being made available. He added that without additional buildings and improved nutrition and vocational training for the children the settlement had "no hope of success". Moseley refrained from commenting on Departmental administration of the settlement and allowed that there might be difficulties preventing Neville from effecting the improvements which were so badly needed, but added that he found it difficult to reconcile the annual expenditure of £5,000 with the deplorable conditions at the settlement.

**Government Response to the Moseley Report**

There was considerable pressure on the state government to be seen to be taking some major action in response to the Moseley Report. During 1935 and 1936 the government received letters from a number of influential organisations including the Australian Natives Association, the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society of London and the British Commonwealth League urging the implementation of Moseley's recommendations and in August 1935 a letter from Mary Bennett was presented to the League of Coloured Peoples in London urging them to request the United Nations to appoint an inquiry into the conditions and treatment of Aborigines in Australia. Nevertheless government action in response to the Report was disappointing. Few of Moseley's beneficial recommendations were implemented and instead the government's major action was to introduce amending legislation
to Parliament which showed the stamp of Neville rather than Moseley. A limited amount of funding was allocated immediately for the appointment of a Medical Inspector in the north and for the establishment of "native hospitals" at Broome and Wyndham and a leprosarium on the outskirts of Derby.\textsuperscript{156} Regular medical inspections were introduced at Moore River settlement in 1936 and on their first visit to the settlement dental officers from the Department of Health performed 129 extractions and the medical officer reported epidemic levels of pneumonia, measles and septic sores amongst the inmates and an alarming level of chronic sore eyes, infected tonsils and bad teeth amongst the children. He recommended an immediate improvement in the children's diet which was lacking in fresh milk, vegetables, fruit and eggs.\textsuperscript{157} In 1937 additional farming land was set aside for Moore River settlement. However, rather than moving the adults from the settlement, the Department began work constructing a "village" for the adult residents (this did not progress beyond the erection of several small huts). In 1938 a kindergarten and dormitory accommodation catering for thirty children were opened at the settlement. The "community settlements" were not developed and instead, in 1939, following continued complaints from white residents about the town camps, the government authorised the re-opening of Carrolup settlement. Plans to open a settlement in the eastern wheatbelt announced in the same year failed to eventuate.\textsuperscript{158} Moseley's recommendation for the establishment of a detention centre for recidivist Aborigines was dropped altogether. The proposed changes to the administration of the Aborigines Department were also shelved, presumably largely in response to Neville's objections to the associated reduction of his powers. The Minister, W.H. Kitson, also told Parliament in 1936 that the system recommended by Moseley
would involve too much expense and create a complex situation of separate administrations with different policies which would take up an inordinate amount of the Minister's time. 159

The 1936 Native Administration Bill

In September 1936 the Labor government introduced the Native Administration Bill to Parliament. This Bill, which proposed a range of major amendments to the 1905 Aborigines Act, owed more to Neville than to Moseley and it drew heavily on Neville's 1929 Aborigines Act Amendment Bill while at the same time extending the range of powers and controls over Aborigines beyond the scope of the original Bill. Those recommendations in Moseley's Report which coincided with Neville's intentions such as the Native Medical Fund and Native Courts were incorporated in the Bill. Those which conflicted with Neville's aims were dropped; for example, the Bill proposed an increase in the Chief Protector's powers over Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal children and his control over the marriage of those persons who came under the Act.

In introducing the Bill to the Legislative Council, W.H. Kitson stated that it was intended for the "uplift and improvement of Aborigines" and that it was concerned largely with remedying the situation of part-Aborigines in the south. 160 To this end the Bill proposed the removal of the distinction between Aborigines and part-Aborigines incorporated in the 1905 Aborigines Act: most now lived the same lifestyle in Aboriginal camps and the existing differentiation based on blood line and lifestyle was no longer relevant. The application of the legislation would be broadened to include the "whole coloured population", with the exception of "quadroons" and "octaroons" over the age of twenty-one who in future would be
prevented by law from mixing with persons deemed to be "Aborigines" under the Act. The clause which allowed for exemption of persons of "superior attainment and qualification" and a remote degree of Aboriginal ancestry from the Act would be retained and individuals refused exemption would now have the right to appeal against the decision. The Bill also proposed replacing the terms "Aboriginal" and "half-caste" with "native" and Kitson assured the members that this would remove the part-Aborigines' objections to their inclusion under the legislation.

In keeping with this change in nomenclature, the Aborigines Department would be renamed the Department of Native Affairs and the Chief Protector would become the Commissioner for Native Affairs. This would remove the "odium" under which the Department's officers "suffered" and would convey to the public the importance placed by the government on Aboriginal affairs. The Bill laid the basis for the development of the Department as a "native Trust department", however there was no mention of an increase in the Department's annual grant to achieve this. The Bill also allowed for the appointment of a network of Travelling Inspectors (again without any mention of funding increase) and the interdependency of the Department and the Police Department was to be increased by making the Department's administrative districts coterminous with those of the Police Department.

The Bill proposed a significant increase in the powers of the Commissioner for Native Affairs. His period of guardianship over children would be increased from sixteen to twenty years of age and would cover all legitimate and illegitimate children of Aborigines. The Commissioner would also have the power to compel all Aborigines to undergo medical examination and treatment and his control over
Aborigines' property and wages would be increased significantly. The Commissioner's permission would also be required before any marriages between "natives" and between "natives" and any other persons could be performed.

The Bill allowed for the introduction of a Native Medical Fund and all employers who had not insured their Aboriginal employees in the normal manner would be obliged by law to contribute to the Fund. The Bill also broadened the definition of "employment" to include casual and contract labour. To facilitate the suing of fathers of part-Aboriginal children for maintenance of their children, the Bill allowed for the admission of corroborating evidence to the mother's oath to prove paternity. The definition of cohabitation would be broadened to include casual sexual intercourse and soliciting by Aboriginal women would become an offence under the Act. Sexual intercourse between Aboriginal men and non-Aboriginal women would also become an offence. Anomalies between the Aborigines Act and the Licensing Act would also be removed by making it an offence for Aborigines to be in, or near, licensed premises.

The Bill also proposed the establishment of Native Courts to hear tribal offences and the granting of powers to the Minister to interfere in certain traditional practices. Trial by jury in proceedings against whites charged with assaulting Aborigines would be abolished and police officers, in their role of protectors of Aborigines, would be disqualified from accepting pleas of "guilty" from Aborigines when personally involved in the prosecution. The Bill also significantly increased penalties for offences against the Act: first offences would carry a minimum term of six months with or without hard labour or a £50 fine; this increased to a minimum sentence of two years or a fine of £200 for a third offence.
A good deal of debate in both Houses focussed on the extension of the application of the act to virtually all part-Aborigines. The members' comments show the muddled nature of thinking on part-Aborigines at the time, ranging from woolly minded sympathy for their plight to expressions of alarm at the growing "half-caste problem". Some members argued that part-Aborigines and those of the full descent should be kept separate from each other, others were simply concerned to have all persons of Aboriginal descent segregated from the wider community. V. Hammersley (East), one of the more effective critics of the Bill, argued in the Legislative Council that it was aimed at the "aggrandisement of the Protector and the degrading of half-castes by placing them on a lower scale than before"161 and he read out a letter from an unnamed part-Aboriginal which pointed out that after twenty years under Neville, there were still no part-Aborigines on the State electoral roll. T. Moore (Centre) also read from a letter sent to him by a part-Aboriginal (again unidentified) who asked whether the government intended passing

...a law to say we half-castes, whether we are 90 per cent white blood...living in a position as good as many white people, [were] still aborigines, and [were] still on the same footing as those on the fringe of civilisation? If we are law-abiding and are getting an honest living, are we not British subjects? I think we are entitled to citizenship. The plight of the half-caste today is due to this department. They have taken charge of the half-caste aborigines for the last 29 years or so and, what have they done for us? The result is: "You are a dog, but keep in your kennell"....Now the Chief Protector wants guardianship over our children whether born in wedlock or not. Our children are our most sacred rights. We are all married in churches. It seems...the department wants to take charge of all [our] earnings and to make sure [we] will be serfs for the State.162
Moore concluded by condemning the removal of children from Aboriginal families by the Department. Objections were also raised at the government's failure to implement the administrative changes recommended by Moseley and increase the Department's annual vote. J.J. Holmes (North), told the Legislative Council that legislative changes would have little impact without "a sympathetic government prepared to find the money so the native race can be cared for". A.A. Coverley (Labor, Kimberley) criticised the increased power of the Commissioner for Native Affairs and accused Neville of thinking that he was the only person with "any right to advise or express an opinion". He added that Neville had held this opinion for so long that he had "convinced himself of the fact". Strong objections were raised to a clause allowing the Commissioner to impose conditions of employment on permitio to employ Aborigines on the grounds that this would make him an "arbitration judge with full control of wages and employment".

Despite strong opposition to the addition of a definition of "employment" to the Bill making it compulsory for employers of Aborigines in contract and seasonal work to also take out permits or agreements and objections from pastoralists that the introduction of the Medical Fund would lead to mass dismissals of Aboriginal workers in the north, these provisions were retained. There was also some opposition to the broader definition of "cohabitation" and one member stated that this would serve to brand a man as a criminal when he was simply "fulfilling a material need in the outback". Another member suggested that the part-Aboriginal population could be limited more effectively through the sterilisation of all Aboriginal women.
Despite a good deal of fiery debate only minor changes were made to the Bill during its passage through Parliament and several changes made in the Legislative Assembly intended to modify the effect of the Bill to protect the interests of employers of Aboriginal labour were thrown out in the Legislative Council. There was general agreement that changes to the 1905 Aborigines Act were long overdue and that the Aborigines Department needed to have "requisite legislative authority" to fully discharge its functions. The legislation also followed precedents already established in other states and in the Northern Territory. The Bill was assented to on 11 December 1936 and was proclaimed on 27 April 1937 under the title of the Native Administration Act, 1905-1936.

The 1936 Native Administration Act

The successful passage of the Bill through Parliament was a personal triumph for Neville. Despite the criticism and controversies of the intervening years, he had gained even greater powers than those he had fought for unsuccessfully in 1929. In addition, while the government did not officially adopt the policy of biological absorption advocated by Neville, the Act nevertheless gave him the necessary powers to implement such a policy. The Department now had unprecedented controls over the lives of Aborigines in Western Australia and, as Paul Hasluck has commented, their legal status had more in common with that of a "congenital idiot" than any other Australian citizen. While the Act may have afforded greater protection and care for Aborigines of the full descent thereby laying the basis for the eradication of some of the abuses reported during the early 1930s, it was a major blow for part-Aborigines in the south of the state. Virtually all persons of Aboriginal descent now came
under the Act and, rather than leading to their uplift, the strict legislative controls contained in it condemned them to live under rigid government control, segregated from the wider community in accordance with the whims of the government and the general public. The wide-ranging controls of the Commissioner for Native Affairs were particularly alarming and, in the words of Mary Bennett, they left the "way open...for every anomaly - AND WORSE".168 *

Under the 1936 Act the Aborigines Department was renamed the Department of Native Affairs—and the title of Chief Protector was changed to Commissioner of Native Affairs. Aborigines and part-Aborigines were now to be referred to as "natives". The Department of Native Affairs retained the same duties, administrative structure and level of annual grant as its predecessor and therewith all the administrative and funding problems which had hampered the operation of the Department over the preceding thirty years. This indicates the level of government commitment to effecting real and positive change in the administration of Aboriginal affairs in the state. The addition of a clause permitting the Governor to appoint Travelling Inspectors to report to the Commissioner on the condition of "natives"

* At the same time Mrs Bennett launched a strong personal attack on Neville, alleging that he had refused permission for Aborigines to marry without suitable grounds, encouraged infant betrothal, withheld Aborigines' wages, and made "colour" rather than "civilisation" the basis of citizenship for Aborigines. Neville subsequently threatened to take legal action against her. This appears to have brought to an end Mary Bennett's personal attacks on Neville (Veen, 1976). Mary Bennett continued to work at Mount Margaret Mission where she wrote Teaching the Aborigines, Hunt or Die, and Human Rights for Aborigines, in which she advocated the introduction of a positive policy for Aborigines which would allow them to control their own affairs while also providing them with technological assistance and education. During the war years she fell ill and returned to England only to return to live in Kalgoorlie after the war. She died there in 1961 at the age of 79 (Wiff Douglas, private communication).
and "native institutions" in the state promised some improvement in communication between the centralised bureaucracy in Perth and honorary protectors in the field. However there was no obligation on the government to provide funding for such positions. Meanwhile, honorary protectors were to be left to interpret for themselves the many new complexities contained in the 1936 Act and to carry out a wide range of new duties without remuneration or promise of professional advancement for work well done. The Department continued to work largely through police officers at the local level and in January 1937 twenty-six police officers, eight stipendiary magistrates and eight private individuals were appointed protectors of Aborigines in the southwest area. 169 A number of new provisions promised some relief from the Department's on-going financial difficulties. Under the Act all employers of "native" labour (including those employed on contract and casual work) were to contribute to the Natives' Medical Fund and this money was to be used to meet the costs of sickness and accidents of "natives" employed under permit. Previously this cost had been met largely by the Department. Employers of "native" casual and contract seasonal workers were now also obliged to take out permits to employ them and to pay the associated fee which then went towards the operation of the Department. In addition all unclaimed moneys due to "natives", the property of deceased "natives" and any estates or moneys to which a "native" was entitled, either as beneficiary or otherwise, were to be transferred directly to the Commissioner of Native Affairs and placed in a special trust account to be used for the benefit of the beneficiaries or Aborigines generally in the state. Property which did not consist of money could be converted to money by the Commissioner and placed to the same credit of the account. The Department's powers to obtain maint-
ence from fathers of "native" children in "native institutions" were also increased through the addition of a clause allowing corroborative evidence to be added to the mother's oath as to the paternity of the child.

A number of other innovations were designed to improve the operation of the legal system in relation to Aborigines in the state. Members of the police force in their role as protectors of Aborigines were no longer permitted to accept pleas of "guilty" from natives in any trial where they were involved with the prosecution. Special measures were included to ensure that the full facts were brought out in cases where a "native" was charged with an offence punishable by death or imprisonment in the first instance and to ensure that there was no possibility of the "native" charged prejudicing his case or committing himself before the Protector of Aborigines had the opportunity of pleading guilty or not guilty on his behalf. Trial by jury in proceedings against whites charged with assaulting Aborigines was also abolished. Criminal offences committed by Aborigines against Aborigines were to be heard before Courts of Native Affairs which were empowered to take into account matters of tribal custom related to the commission of the offence in the mitigation of punishment. Anomalies between the 1905 Aborigines Act and the Licensing Act, 1911-1922 in relation to the supply of alcohol to "natives" and their presence on licensed premises were also removed to protect "natives" from undue legal harrassment and to ensure the full implementation of the laws. Nevertheless Aborigines remained severely disadvantaged before the law. This was particularly so under the terms of the 1936 Act which retained the system of summary prosecutions before a Resident Magistrate or two Justices of the Peace, increased the range of offences under its provisions and the
range of persons of Aboriginal descent who could be charged with these offences and added harsh penalties for second and third or subsequent offences against the Act. (In the case of a second offence offenders could receive a maximum sentence of twelve months' imprisonment or a fine of £100 and for third and subsequent offences up to two years' imprisonment and a maximum fine of £200).

The central clause in the 1936 Act was that defining those persons to be deemed "natives" within the meaning of the Act. Briefly, this included all persons of full Aboriginal descent and all those of mixed Aboriginal descent with the following exceptions: all "quadroons" over the age of twenty-one unless classed as "native" by magisterial order (this was intended to apply largely to adult "quadroons" who lived as "natives") and persons of less than "quadroon" descent born before 31 January 1936. Neville later stated that "quadroon" referred only to a person with a "half-caste" parent and a non-Aboriginal parent and a person with "quadroon" parents on both sides. Such persons were prohibited by law from associating with "natives".

The definition of "native" now embraced a range of persons previously exempt from special legislation, including those with "half-caste" parents on both sides, "quadroons" under the age of twenty-one and those with an Aboriginal father and other than Aboriginal mother. It applied equally to those persons living an Aboriginal lifestyle and those living as Europeans. This definition further encouraged the practice noted earlier in the implementation of the 1905 Act whereby the Department and local protectors treated all part-Aborigines as if they came under the Act unless challenged. It also led to a complex and ridiculous system whereby individual part-Aborigines' status under the Act was decided on by Departmental
officers on the basis of fractional amounts of Aboriginal descent. Persons deemed to be "natives" were now included under all provisions of the Act with the exception of "half-castes" over the age of twenty-one who did not associate with "natives". They were excluded from certain provisions relating to employment. This contrasted with the previous legislation which excluded "half-castes" who did not live or associate with Aborigines from certain important provisions such as those relating to removal to reserves and settlements and marriage to non-Aborigines. The Act retained the clause allowing "natives" to apply for exemption from the Act and added a clause allowing aggrieved "natives" to apply to a Magistrate against an adverse decision handed down by the Commissioner.

The Act introduced a wide range of restrictions on the personal liberties and way of life of persons deemed to be "natives" in addition to those already contained in the Act relating to removal to reserves and settlements, their presence around towns and settled areas of the state, their interaction with the wider community and access to alcohol. As has been indicated, stricter controls over employment and Aboriginal earnings and property were added to the legislation. Any act of sexual intercourse between "natives" of either sex and "non-natives" was now an offence against the Act, as was also soliciting by "native" women. All "natives" had to have the prior permission of the Commissioner of Native Affairs to marry and he could oppose any marriage on the following grounds: that the marriage was against tribal custom, one partner had a communicable disease, there was a marked disparity in age between the partners and "any other circumstances which render[ed] it inadvisable". The Commissioner could authorise any person to medically examine a "native" and any "native" who refused to undergo such examination
or to receive medical treatment was committing an offence against
the Act. The Commissioner was now the legal guardian of all "native"
children, whether legitimate or illegitimate until they reached the
age of twenty-one. The Minister could, on the advice of the Commiss-
ioner, put a stop to any traditional Aboriginal practices deemed to
be "injurious" to "natives". Escapes by "natives" from Departmental
reserves and institutions were to be reduced through the increased
penalties for offences against the Act and through the addition of
a clause making it an offence to provide escapees with any form of
assistance. The 1936 Act provided the Department with the power
to carry out biological and social engineering programmes on part-
Aborigines which threatened the continued existence of the part-
Aboriginal community in the south as a distinct racial and ethnic
community. Virtually any child of Aboriginal descent could be taken
suitably from his or her family and placed in a government institution
to be trained in the ways of "white civilisation" and "society".
The Commissioner of Native Affairs, not their parents, had total
control over their lives until they reached the age of twenty-one.
From this age any person of the "quarter caste" or less was prohibited
by law from associating with persons deemed to be "natives" regardless
of their relationship to that person. In this way they were to be
forced to live in the white community, although no measures were
introduced to force white people to accept them. Other part-
Aboriginal adults were to remain under the strict control of the
Department, either in employment in the wider community or segregated
in government settlements or reserves, where their lives could be
ordered to conform to the ways of the wider community, rather than
to their own Aboriginal traditions. In addition to this social
engineering, the Commissioner had the power to see to the gradual
breeding out of "colour" in the part-Aboriginal community. Through his controls over marriages of "natives", the Commissioner could ensure that part-Aborigines married "lighter" rather than "darker" persons of Aboriginal or other racial descent, while the prohibition on the mixing of persons of "quacoon" and less descent with "natives" obliged them to seek near white marriage partners. The increased restrictions on miscegenation outside marriage could also act to prevent the continued injection of a darker strain into the part-Aboriginal community through unions of "natives" with members of other racial groups such as African and American blacks and Asiatics. At the same time these restrictions on marriage and miscegenation outside of marriage were intended to strictly limit births of part-Aboriginal children resulting from white and Aboriginal unions. Through these controls the part-Aboriginal community in the south could be gradually "bred out" in accordance with the principles of biological assimilation, thereby providing an ultimate solution to the whole part-Aboriginal "problem" in the south of the state.

Conclusion

The 1930s was a disastrous period for Aborigines in the southwest of Western Australia. The Great Depression led to their widespread unemployment and to a dramatic deterioration in their living conditions. Government neglect of their plight further compounded their problems. Their growing presence in fringe camps in southern towns as the effects of the Depression worsened led to an outburst of racism amongst the white town residents which mirrored that of the years preceding the First World War and which led to renewed demands for their segregation from the wider community. The combined effect of these factors left them demoralised and in poor health.
and openly bitter and resentful at their treatment by the wider community. Public discussion during the early 1930s on the "part-Aboriginal problem" in the south and on the situation of Aborigines in the north of the state and the resulting Moseley Royal Commission were followed by the introduction of the 1936 Native Administration Act. This represented the fulfilment of Neville's long-standing aim to secure what he saw as the necessary powers to achieve a "solution" to the situation of Aborigines of mixed descent, especially in the south. However it was in fact to precipitate a further deterioration in their situation. Based largely on Neville's ideas, this amending legislation embraced a wider range of persons of Aboriginal descent than any previous legislation and introduced harsher controls and restrictions on the lives of all persons of Aboriginal descent. This legislation incorporated the policies of the segregation of Aborigines of the full descent and the social and biological assimilation of those of mixed descent into the wider community. As such it threatened the continued existence of the predominantly part-Aboriginal community in the south as a distinct racial and cultural group in the Western Australian community.
FOOTNOTES – Chapter Eight

2. Hasluck, 1938.
4. AR/1932.
5. Tom Bennell, Appendix I, Interview 2.
7. AR/1929, 1933.
13. AR/1931.
14. AR/1929, 1933.
17. AR/1920, 1931, 1933.
18. AR/1931.
22. Ibid.
27. PP, 1933: 643.
29. AR/1929, 1934.
32. Tom Bennell, Appendix I, Interview 2.
34. Hasluck, 1939.
37. AR/1933.
38. A/221/1936.
40. WA 14/10/1930.
41. GSH 16/9/1931.
42. A/420/1930.
43. DN 13/12/1930.
44. WA 4/10/1930.
47. A/92/1934.
49. A/423/1927.
52. A/158/1931, 283/1921.
53. A/382/1933.
54. AR/1928, 1932.
55. AR/1932.
56. AR/1931: 2.
57. WA 4/10/1933.
60. Lilly Hayward, Appendix I, Interview 5.
61. WA 4/10/1933.
62. WA 19/9/1933.
63. A/21/1933.
65. A/21/1933.
67. A/21/1933.
68. Ibid.
70. A/231/1933.
71. WA 11/5/1933.
72. E/2223/1926.
73. A/231/1933.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
78. A/213/1927.
80. Neville to MRC (oral): 90.
81. Irene Farrell, Appendix I, Interview 3.
83. AR/1931, 1933.
84. Stoneman to MRC (oral).
86. Ibid.
89. CS/1261/1921.
92. PD, 90, 1933.
94. Ibid: 209.
95. WA 12/10/1932.
96. WA 4/9/1933.
98. WA 31/5/1933.
100. Hasluck, 1977.
101. WA 22/7/1933.
102. Dr Bryan to MRC (oral): 357 ff.
103. A/420/1930.
104. Mrs Kischbieth to MRC (written): 987/RISCHBIETH.
107. Ibid.
110. WA 19/5/1932.
113. DN 17/6/1933.
114. DN 19/6/1933.
115. DN 24/6/1933.
117. AR/1932.
118. Neville to MRC (oral).
119. PD, 90, 1933: 642.
120. WA 2/8/1933; PD, 90, 1933: 643.
121. Neville to MRC (oral).
122. PD, 90, 1933: 639.
124. Ibid: 749.
125. Ibid: 753.
126. WA 24/1/1934.
131. DN 13/12/1933, 14/12/1933.
132. WA 11/12/1933.
133. A/166/1932.
135. WA 18/6/1934; A/200/1932.
136. Neville to MRC: 1 ff.
137. Bennett to MRC: 213 ff.
139. Norman Harris to MRC (oral): 180.
140. David Nannup to MRC (written).
143. Anonymous letter to MRC.
144. Anonymous letter to MRC.
146. Albert Dinah to MRC (oral): 426.
147. Mary Alice Harris to MRC (written): 987/11, 28/3/1934.
149. Moseley, 1934.
150. Ibid: 22.
151. Ibid: 23.
152. Ibid: 8.
154. Ibid: 11.
155. DN 17/8/1935.
157. AR/1936.
159. PD, 97, 1936: 710 ff.
160. Ibid: 710.
162. PD, 97, 1936: 977-8.
163. Ibid: 880.
164. PD, 99, 1936: 2379.
165. PD, 98, 1936: 1071.
168. DN 14/2/1938.
169. GG 15/1/1937: 30-31.
CONCLUSION

By 1936 the approximately 3,000 Aborigines living in the south-west of Western Australia had come to be regarded by the wider community as a social problem. Most were trapped in a cycle of poverty characterised by long periods of unemployment, deplorable living conditions, malnutrition, disease and premature death and their children, who were growing up without schooling or vocational training, appeared to have few prospects of breaking out of this cycle. Discriminatory laws and a repressive administration had shaped them into second-class citizens and, rejected and despised by the wider community, they had become outcasts in their own land. There was widespread anger and bitterness amongst Aborigines at their plight and many were openly hostile and resentful of authority and persons outside their networks of family and kin. At the same time their numbers were increasing rapidly and politicians and administrators could well express concern about their future place in the Western Australian community.

The Aborigines' situation was brought about by the complex interplay of a range of causal factors. Special discriminatory laws and bureaucratic practices allowed for their rigid control and segregation, while major socio-economic changes in the south from the turn of the century, together with a sustained increase in their own population and the spread of racial prejudice and discriminatory behaviour towards Aborigines, precipitated their pauperisation and exclusion from the wider community. These events occurred against a backdrop of government concern to protect the interests of the dominant white society and indifference to the Aborigines' plight and the Aborigines' own powerlessness to influence their terms of
participation in the wider community. They had to survive as best they could, drawing on their traditional bush skills and rural and domestic work to support their families and on their resources of family and kin for support in times of unemployment and for entertainment and companionship.

The 1905 Aborigines Act set the framework for policy and the administration of Aboriginal affairs in Western Australia for the following thirty years. Incorporating the aims of protection, exclusion and segregation of Aborigines, it was intended to provide for their "better protection and care". In fact, it laid the basis for a system which acted to repress and control Aborigines while it protected the interests of the administration and the wider community. The Aborigines Department, set up to administer the Act and to provide for the welfare needs of Aborigines and the education of their children, was inadequately funded and staffed and, acting through a local network of police officers, it was poorly placed to see that its various functions were carried out properly at the local level. Standards of welfare and education provided by the Department were abysmal and, in the interests of economy and bureaucratic expediency, there was a strong emphasis on providing these services in centralised institutional settings and a sustained demand from administrators for greater powers to force Aborigines to comply with Departmental goals.

Once in existence, the Aborigines Act was implemented as it it applied to virtually any person of Aboriginal descent. Through the provisions intended to strictly control interaction between Aborigines and others, the Act served to further establish Aborigines as a separate category and to drive a wedge between them and the
wider community. Aborigines were also denied a wide range of rights and personal freedoms granted automatically to other Australians and control over even the most intimate facets of their lives was placed in the hands of government officers. There were few controls over how officers used these powers and this allowed for considerable abuse by Departmental staff and police officers acting to protect their own or the local community's interests. Without access to the courts and the political process, there was little that Aborigines could do to counteract this. Harshest penalties for Aborigines and others failing to comply with the provisions of the Act were implemented repressively for Aborigines through the actions of police officers and the local courts. Aboriginal "troublemakers" were arrested and almost invariably sentenced to imprisonment, while white offenders were generally treated sympathetically by their peers. Where there was strong unresolved conflict between the interests of Aborigines and the local white community, the government and the Department generally bowed to community pressure and, using powers incorporated in the Aborigines Act, authorised the removal of the Aborigines and their segregation in Departmental institutions.

These processes were evident in the southwest from 1906, however, it was not until the years immediately following the Great War that the Aborigines Act was fully implemented there. This was precipitated by major socio-economic changes in the area from the turn of the century. Rapid agricultural development and white settlement in today's wheat belt area broke down the Aborigines' existing economic and social adaptations. They were forced off the land where they camped and hunted and were obliged to compete with the new settlers for limited casual rural work. They also had to face the preference of employers for white workers and growing Trade Union opposition
to their presence in the workforce. The Aborigines' deteriorating economic situation was exacerbated by the increase in their own population and many workers found it increasingly difficult to provide for their growing number of dependants.

The Aborigines' former paternalistic relationships with pastoralists and other white employers were replaced by rigid caste barriers excluding Aborigines from participating in the emerging communities. This reflected the racist attitudes of the new settlers to Aborigines of the full and part descent. Based on ignorance, fear, pseudo-scientific theories of Social Darwinism, popular folklore and spreading ideas of a "White Australia", these attitudes were reinforced by the Aborigines' deteriorating living conditions, their low social standing, and their special legal and administrative status. This in turn justified the settlers' discriminatory treatment of Aborigines and contributed to the process of group formation amongst the new settlers: Aborigines provided a measure against which they could set their modest achievements and were a group against whom the settlers could join together in opposition.

Economic and social insecurities brought about by drought conditions, economic difficulties and the approaching war, together with the growing presence of Aborigines in the rural towns, brought Aborigines and whites into direct conflict during the years immediately preceding the war. The enrolment of Aboriginal children in local state schools during this period provoked an outcry and, acting through their local organisations, the white townspeople pressured the government to expel the children and remove the families from the towns altogether.

While the Scaddon Labor government quickly authorised the expulsion of Aboriginal children from the schools, it was loath to
involve itself in any additional expenditure on Aboriginal affairs. However, with mounting community pressure it was obliged to take action and in 1915 the government adopted the "native settlement scheme" and appointed an energetic Chief Protector, A.O. Neville, to implement it and to see that the Aborigines Act was enforced more rigidly in the southwest. Under this scheme Aborigines were to be removed from their home districts and forced to live in self-supporting farming communities where they would be isolated from the wider community, while their children were trained to find work and social acceptance outside the settlements. This fitted with the Department's emphasis on centralising its services and also meant that Aborigines could contribute to their keep through their work on the settlements and by providing a labour pool for local farmers as required. While this appeased the white townspeople, it meant that Aborigines were to be further dislocated from their home districts, their families were to be broken up and they were to lose their independence and contact with the outside world. Not surprisingly most Aborigines strongly resisted being sent to the settlements. Those who remained outside faced the continual threat of being forced to go there. However, lacking economic and political power and the necessary organisational skills, there was little they could do to halt these processes.

Lack of funding and suitable land, together with non-cooperation from Aborigines, hindered their wholesale removal to Moore River and Carrolup settlements, and prevented the settlements from achieving their aims. Following the closure of Carrolup in 1922, Moore River quickly degenerated into a multi-purpose "total institution" which was used as a place of permanent incarceration for Aborigines unwanted in the wider community. Strict controls over the behaviour of
inmates, poorly trained staff and overcrowded and inadequate facilities made the settlement a forbidding place. Self-sufficiency was never achieved but the institutional nature of the settlement served to create the foundations of an enduring institutionalised community, interconnected by ties of kinship and marriage and by their identification as inmates of Moore River. Children received only rudimentary training and were sent out to work under the strict control of the Department. They rarely found acceptance on the outside and most drifted back to Moore River or went to live with relatives in town camps in the south.

Camping reserves established by the Department on the fringes of several towns following the closure of Carrolup and complaints from white residents at the associated increased presence of Aborigines in the towns, quickly became the rural ghettos of the south. Located on unwanted land outside the towns, most had no running water and no rubbish or sanitary services, and families huddled together in makeshift huts and tents. Centralised on the reserves, Aborigines were brought more directly under the control of the Department and the police, and their living conditions made them vulnerable to having their children removed to Moore River and to being sent there themselves. Meanwhile, the continuing caste barriers limited their access to even such basic services as local hospitals and promoted the development of two social worlds, Aboriginal and white, in the rural towns. Aborigines in the camps developed a way of life based on economic insecurity, avoidance of authority figures such as the police and members of the white town community, and a strong sense of oppression and injustice. Their common experience forged a strong sense of identity which was reinforced by overlapping ties of kinship and marriage and mutual
sharing and helping obligations. Excluded from local schools, children grew up in the ways of their parents and in this way some features of traditional Aboriginal life continued to be handed down.

The Great Depression brought more Aborigines into the cycle of poverty in the camps and into the drab institutional way of life at Moore River. Faced with the desperate plight of the reserve dwellers, local white residents simply renewed their demands for the Aborigines' immediate segregation from the wider community, while Chief Protector Neville's attempts to draw attention to the need for direct immediate intervention to remedy the situation went almost unnoticed. Although criticisms in the Australian and overseas press of the treatment of Aborigines in the north precipitated the appointment of the Moseley Royal Commission in 1934, Neville's ideas dominated the amending Native Administration Act passed two years later. This legislation had major implications for the predominantly mixed descent Aboriginal population in the south and threatened their continued existence as a racially and culturally distinct minority by allowing for the forced training of Aboriginal children in European ways and, through the regulation of marriages by the Department, for the progressive breeding out of Aboriginal racial characteristics over several generations.

As has been indicated, Aborigines were virtually powerless to halt this train of events. They were excluded from participating in local, state and national political processes and lacked organisational structures of their own. Nevertheless, they did not remain silent and during the period they made their objections to their treatment known in a variety of ways. The loudest and earliest complaints came from the "mission-educated elite", most of whom had previously been unaffected by special discriminatory legislation.
They wrote letters to the Department, politicians and the press, on their own or their family's behalf or as representatives of their small local communities. Some wrote requesting exemption from the Aborigines Act and at the same time expressed their objections to its provisions, others expressed their anger at particular instances of injustice and demanded that steps be taken to rectify the situations. There was little organised activity apart from the ill-fated meeting at Katanning in 1914 and the short-lived Native Union of the late 1920s, and the deputation to the Premier in 1928 provided one of the few general statements by Aborigines concerning their grievances and suggested remedies to the situation. Attempts at violent opposition were few and were usually spontaneous outbursts associated with consumption of alcohol. The dispersed nature of the Aboriginal population, the likely repercussions of such actions and the people's feelings of oppression and futility militated against such actions. During the desperate Depression years a few groups threatened violence against property to draw attention to their plight. Non-compliance and passive resistance were more typical responses, however. Actions such as absconding, deliberately flouting rules, acting the fool, refusing to follow orders, sullen behaviour and so on, were generally interpreted as deviant or even criminal behaviour, or simply as innate characteristics of Aborigines. However, they can be more meaningfully interpreted as deliberate responses to social situations or a range of negative sanctions. Typically found in institutional settings, such responses enable individuals to maintain their sense of identity and separateness in the face of overwhelming oppression.
The fate of Aborigines in the southwest from 1936 and the major changes in policy and administration in Aboriginal affairs during the post-war years are topics for further major studies. Suffice to say that Aborigines have endured as a distinctive indigenous minority, with a common identity which draws strongly on their shared historical experience of injustice, oppression and institutionalisation. It is ironic that the official policy of enforced social assimilation through the "native settlement scheme" and the efforts by the wider community to sweep the Aboriginal "problem" under the carpet by isolating Aborigines on town reserves should have played a major role in forging this identity.
APPENDIX I

TRANSCRIPTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH ABORIGINES
Interviews have been removed in the online version of this thesis.
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APPENDIX II

ABORIGINAL RESERVES
(a) **Aboriginal Reserves declared in the southwest between 1872-1936**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reserve Number</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>146 A</td>
<td>New Morcia 29 acres. <em>Government Gazette</em> 13/12/1874.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>940</td>
<td>Busselton 500 acres. Declared 1881, cancelled 1890. Used for Anglican Aboriginal and Half-caste Home. The Anglican Church requested in 1893 that the land be declared a reserve again. This was approved by the Aborigines Protection Board but the reserve does not appear to have been gazetted. <em>Aborigines Protection Board Minutes</em>, 30/3/1893.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>738 A</td>
<td>Nelson 100 acres. For the use and benefit of Aborigines. <em>GG</em> 25/9/1884.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>967</td>
<td>Melbourne 25,000 acres. For the Benedictine Mission at Marah. <em>GG</em> 22/4/1886.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1229</td>
<td>Swan 2,360 acres. For the use of Aborigines. <em>GG</em> 1887: 412. 1901 cancelled and thrown open for selection for Conditional Purchase and Homestead Farms as from 1/5/1901. (The Aboriginal Lands Trust holds 150 acres of the original reserve in trust as Yellagonga’s Country Mooro.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4681</td>
<td>Katanning (Town Lots 309, 399) 2 r., 28 p. Hospital for Aborigines (<em>Aborigines Department Annual Report, 1899</em>). Declared following outbreak of typhoid amongst Aborigines at Katanning to act as an isolation camp. It was subsequently used to accommodate Aboriginal patients generally until the Katanning Roads Board requested in 1904 that the &quot;Native Hospital&quot; be moved to a site outside of town (<em>Aborigines Department files</em> 396/1904).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>985</td>
<td>Canning/Welshpool 500 acres. For Native Settlement (<em>Aborigines Department Annual Report 1899</em>). Also known as Welshpool Reserve, and referred to by Daisy Bates as Maamba. Individual plots of this land were allocated to the settlement residents to cultivate. The reserve was cancelled in 1904 and became Reserve No. 9368, 245 acres. For use of Aborigines. <em>GG</em> 9/9/1904. This may have reflected the change of purpose of Welshpool Reserve from a settlement to a camping and ration depot for Aborigines in the metropolitan area in 1903.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Number</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>985 (contd.)</td>
<td>In 1908 the running of Welshpool Reserve was handed over to the Australian Inland Mission and the reserve was to be held in trust by the Mission for Aborigines. GG 13/3/1908. However, the Mission was unsuccessful and the missionaries left in the same year. In 1910 the reserve was declared a reserve for Aborigines under the 1905 Aborigines Act. GG 4/2/1910. The reserve was cancelled in 1928 and its purpose changed to a recreation reserve. GG 13/4/1928.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9622</td>
<td>Katanning (Lot 547) 5 acres. GG 23/6/1905. For use of Aborigines. This was probably used as a camping ground and may have been the camp visited by Daisy Bates in 1908. In 1912 the boundaries were amended to include Lot 777 and part of Lot 547. GG 20/11/1912. This followed a request from the Australian Aborigines Mission authorities who began mission work in Katanning in 1912. AD/2922/1914. Reserve cancelled in 1915 after the removal of Aborigines from the town camp to Carrolup Native Settlement. Purpose of the reserve changed to &quot;public utility&quot;. GG 23/4/1915; AD/2922/1914. In 1944 Lots 777 and 547 were again declared as a reserve for the use of Aborigines. AD/92/34.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10056</td>
<td>Wellington (Bunbury) 40 acres. For the use of Aborigines, camping. GG 23/3/1906. Aborigines moved there from the quarry reserve two miles out of Bunbury on the Blackwood Road. Aborigines Department Annual Report, 1905.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7096</td>
<td>Sussex (Location 342) 100 acres. Formerly reserved for the use of Aboriginal, Sarah Lowe. Purpose changed to &quot;for the use of Aborigines&quot;. GG 29/11/1907. Portions of Kojonup Location P.14 proclaimed reserve for Aborigines under the 1905 Aborigines Act. GG 22/10/1909. (No reserve number given.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Number</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<td>----------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12720</td>
<td>Formerly part of Guildford Common, approximately 48 acres. Camping for Aborigines. GG 27/5/1910. Proclaimed following complaints from white residents and police about Aboriginal camps at West Guildford. The Guildford Council stated that the Aborigines were contravening the Health Regulations. Aborigines camped at the Recreation Reserve at Success Hill were also moved to Res. No. 12720. The reserve was cancelled in 1917. Aborigines refused to camp there as it was too far from town and was also adjacent to the Guildford Cemetery. Colonial Secretary/195/1927. In 1936 Aborigines camped in Guildford were moved to Res. No. 12720. AD/158/1931. In 1941 the reserve was taken over by the Army. The reserve subsequently became Alouwah Grove, a housing estate for Aborigines during the 1950s. Beverley 7 acres. Declared a reserve for Aborigines under the 1905 Aborigines Act. GG 11/8/1911. (No reserve number given.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15566</td>
<td>Narrogin (Lot 1110) 10 acres. Aboriginal camping ground. GG 17/7/1914. 1915 declared a reserve for Aborigines under the 1905 Aborigines Act. GG 15/1/1915; AD/463/1914; CS/38/1915.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9089</td>
<td>Carrolup Native Settlement 700 acres. Not gazetted but reported in AD/725/1915. Cancelled in 1921.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16370</td>
<td>Carrolup Native Settlement. GG 20/4/1916. Boundaries altered and area amended to 10,768 acres. GG 24/6/1921. Kojonup Aboriginal Settlement, boundaries and area amended to 11,000 acres. GG 24/6/1921. The reserve was cancelled in 1922 when the settlement was closed and the settlement residents transferred to Moore River Native Settlement. Carrolup Native Settlement was re-opened in 1938.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Number</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16599</td>
<td>Toodyay (Lot 175) 2r., 28 p. Cemetery for Aborigines. GG 22/12/1916. In 1891 a part-Aboriginal man, William Shaw, requested the Aborigines Protection Board to reserve this land. He was concerned that the Aboriginal graves there would be disturbed if they fell into the hands of private owners (APB Minutes, 1891-93). However, it was not until 1916, when the railway line was being built from Toodyay to Bolgart, and Aborigines working in the railway gang became aware that they were disturbing a traditional burial ground in their work that steps were taken to have the area declared a reserve. (The land had been sold to W. Donegan to B.D. Clarkson during the 1890s. Donegan had intended to establish a vineyard on the block.) Erickson, E., Old Toodyay and Newcastle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16359</td>
<td>Location 1852, Plan 64/80 C4 20 acres. For the use of Aborigines. GG 14/4/1916. (The exact location of the reserve is not stated in the Gazette, but judging by the size of the reserve, it may be in the south.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16833</td>
<td>Swan and Melbourne 9,600 acres. For the use of Aborigines (Moore River Native Settlement). GG 2/11/1917. This includes a traditional camping site known as Palm Flats which was being used by Aborigines formerly attached to New Norcia up until 1917. In 1918 the reserve was declared a reserve under the 1905 Aborigines Act. GG 12/4/1918.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17702</td>
<td>In 1921 one acre was set aside for use as a cemetery at Moore River Native Settlement. GG 20/5/1921.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18042</td>
<td>Williams (Lot 318) 6 acres, 0 r., 17 p. Camping ground for Aborigines. GG 14/7/1922.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Number</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18034</td>
<td>Katanning (Lot 841) 1 r., ½ p. Camping ground for Aborigines. GG 15/9/1922.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5160</td>
<td>Albany (Albany Town Lots 262, 263, 264 and 265) 2 acres, 3 r., 14 p. Reserve for Aborigines. GG 14/7/1922. Location map included in AD/61/1930. The reserve was cancelled in 1949 and resumed by the State Housing Commission for building purposes. A new reserve, No. 593 (Lot 116) of 5 acres, 2r., 10 p. was declared in the same year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18426</td>
<td>Katanning (Lot 442) 30 acres. Camping ground for Aborigines. GG 26/10/1923. Location map included in Aborigines Department file 92/1934. 1935 proclaimed a reserve under the 1905 Aborigines Act. GG 22/2/1935.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18645</td>
<td>Avon (Bajeling) - all Crown land in the townsite not reserved for other purposes, some 72 acres in all. Camping ground for Aborigines. GG 20/6/1924. (See Res. No. 20999.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8567</td>
<td>York (Lot 25) 10 acres. For the use of Aborigines. GG 25/7/1924. Location map included in AD/341/1933. 1936 proclaimed a reserve under the 1905 Aborigines Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18975</td>
<td>Woodinalling 5 acres. Aborigines - camping. I could not locate this reserve in the Government Gazette but it was probably declared around 1925. See AD/175/1932.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19946</td>
<td>Avon (near Beverley) 10 acres. For the use of Aborigines. GG 26/10/1928.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Number</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>289 A</td>
<td>Brookton, camping ground for Aborigines. GG 12/12/1930.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>299</td>
<td>Brookton, declared reserve for Aborigines under the 1905 Aborigines Act. 8 acres, 1 r. GG 24/2/1933. See also AD/377/1930.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20999</td>
<td>Avon (Location 18456, 19699) 1,066 acres, 3 r., 25 p. This was the site of Badjaling Mission which was established in 1930 and was the home for Aborigines from the Quairading district until the 1950s. AD/37/1930.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20520</td>
<td>Esperance (Location 813 and 815) 809 acres. GG 29/8/1930.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1933 20 perches of a block in Bennett Street, East Perth were declared as a reserve for Aborigines under the 1905 Aborigines Act. This had been set aside for the use of the Aborigines Department (it was formerly the Headmaster's residence of East Perth State School). In 1931 the Department established the East Perth Girls Home there. The Home provided accommodation for young women on holidays in Perth or in-between jobs. Girls were also sent down from Moore River Native Settlement to complete their training as domestic servants there. See AD/41/1933.

<p>| 21026          | Kojonup (Location 8393) 70 acres, 2 r., 32 p. Reserve for Aborigines. GG 13/4/1933. |
| 21153          | Kellerberrin (Location 17066) 100 acres. Aborigines camping ground. GG 22/12/1933. This reserve was adjacent to the Leake's property Mooraboppin. In 1920 the Superintendent of Moore River described the site as an &quot;ancient camping ground&quot; of the local Aborigines and noted that it was still in constant use. The Djurin Mission was later established adjacent to the camping reserve. The whole area was constantly used by local Aborigines until the development of town housing in the 1960s. There |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reserve Number</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21153 (contd.)</td>
<td>There are two or three traditional Aboriginal graves located on the former reserve land as well as a number of non-traditional graves. There are also small caves with traditional paintings there. The land is now owned by descendants of the Leake family. The Aboriginal custodian of the caves and the area is Mr Cliff Humphries of Kellerberrin. See also AD/202/1927.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Reserves set aside for the use of Aborigines as farming blocks under the 1887 Land Regulations and the 1898 Lands Act between 1890 and 1936

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reserve Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>2056</td>
<td>Wellington Agricultural Area 100 acres. For the use of Edward Farrell. GG 28/7/1892. Cancelled 1915. See Lands and Surveys 1721/1892; Aborigines Department 467/1915.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2143</td>
<td>Williams 100 acres. For the use of Aboriginal W. Harriell. GC 24/11/1892. See AD/440/1898; Aborigines Department Annual Report 1899.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2439</td>
<td>Nelson 10 acres. For the use of Aboriginal Queejup. GG 15/12/1893.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2541</td>
<td>Nelson 100 acres. For the use of Aboriginal Quigup. GG 21/12/1894.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2586</td>
<td>Coolup Agricultural Area (Lot 149). For the use of Aboriginal Tymbie. GG 10/8/1894. In 1898 Charles Tymbie (or Timbul) exchanged this land for a block at Canning Reserve 985. See AD/440/1898. Reserve No. 2586 was cancelled in 1901. See LS/2455/1894.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2945</td>
<td>Ewlarmartup Agricultural Area, Lot 140, 140 acres. For the use of Moraitch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2946</td>
<td>Ewlarmartup Agricultural Area, Lot 140, 140 acres. For the use of Johnny Penny.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2947</td>
<td>Ewlarmartup Agricultural Area, Lot 140, 150 acres. For the use of William Farmer. GG 26/9/1894 or 1895. See LS/1508/1894. The reserves were cancelled on 11/11/1895. See AD/466/1915.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2904</td>
<td>Swan 114 acres. For the use of William Shaw. GG 1895: 774. The reserve was cancelled in 1903.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>On the Belgarrup River, south of Cadgenollup, 100 acres. For the use of William Wallam. LS/1508/1894.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Number</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2491</td>
<td>Jandakot Agricultural Area 101 acres. For the use of Aboriginal Fred Lewington. GG 23/3/1894. See Location Map included in LS/1687/1893.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7018</td>
<td>Melbourne 200 acres. For the use of Aboriginal Paul Narrier. GG 19/1/1900. The reserve was cancelled in 1911 and was granted to Benedict Cooper as 13753. GG 1/9/1911.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7132</td>
<td>Avon (Location 3466) 100 acres. For the use of Aboriginal Kippin. GG 6/4/1900. 1908 - cancelled and thrown open for selection. See AD/2922/1914.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7096</td>
<td>Sussex (Location 342) 100 acres. For the use of Aboriginal Sarah Lowe. GG 9/3/1900. 1907 - the purpose of the reserve was changed to &quot;for the use of Aborigines&quot;. GG 29/11/1907.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8554</td>
<td>Melbourne 200 acres. For the use of Charles Ponan. GG 13/2/1903. The reserve was cancelled in 1907. However, following objections from Ponan the reserve was re-declared. GG 25/10/1907.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8555</td>
<td>Melbourne 200 acres. For the use of Charles Fitzgerald. GG 13/2/1903. 1907 - to be cancelled and thrown open for selection. See AD/357/1907.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8557</td>
<td>Melbourne 200 acres. For the use of Lucas Murricherry. GG 13/2/1903. Boundaries of the reserve amended GG 28/8/1903. 1907 - the reserve granted to Lucas Moody. GG 20/9/1907. It is likely that Lucas Moody and Murricherry are the same person, and as in the case of Ponan the reserve was cancelled and then returned to the reserve-holder following his objections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9207</td>
<td>Gin Gin (Suburban Lot 77) 2 acres, 2 r., 25 p. For the use of William Shaw. GG 13/5/1904.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve Number</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10211</td>
<td>Avon (near Meckering) 160 acres. For the use of Tommy Moichan. GG 4/5/1906.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10758</td>
<td>Sussex (Waterfall) 100 acres. For the use of George Long. GG 3/5/1907. Map of location included in AD/679/1906.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11703</td>
<td>Avon (Jennaberring Agricultural Area) 150 acres. For the use of Edward Jacobs. GG 22/1/1909. 1920 - reserve cancelled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12437</td>
<td>Victoria (near Cudemera) 160 acres. For the use of George Waggergal. GG 21/1/1910.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12891</td>
<td>Avon 160 acres. For the use of George Nunglett. GG 8/1/1910.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13753</td>
<td>Melbourne 200 acres. For the use of Benedict Cooper. Reserve 7018 (see earlier) cancelled. GG 1/9/1911.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5835</td>
<td>For the use of Peter Wogin. GG 1913: 4737.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4082</td>
<td>Kojonup (Location 4082) 399 acres. For the use of James Noondong. GG 1/5/1914. 1930 - cancelled and purpose changed to &quot;Protection of Native Flora and Fauna&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16423</td>
<td>Sussex 10 acres. For the use of Joe Coulboung (Colbung). See LS/4610/1918 and AD/1665/1915 (location map included).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20688</td>
<td>Kent 160 acres. For the use of Harry Sterlight. GG 22/5/1931.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20708</td>
<td>Kent 160 acres. For the use of Bob Cowong. GG 19/6/1931.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20943</td>
<td>Avon (Location 18595) 160 acres. For the use of family of John Ninvette (deceased). GG 30/9/1932.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX III

CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE NATIVE UNION
Half-Castes and the Franchise

Sir,

The proposed enfranchisement of the half-castes produced a lot of insulting remarks from some members of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly especially the Leader (Sir James Mitchell), whose statements were very misleading and bitter. Sir James said the bulk of the half-castes were to be found in the sparsely populated parts of the country leading the lives of the natives. He knows very well, or, as a public man, he should know, that the natives are living exactly the same as whites, when possible - by hard work. There is no other way in which they can live. Most of them do contract work: some have farms and are educated, and in that respect they compare more favourably with the class of Indians that come here. Moreover, the aborigines and half-castes are not aliens; they are in their own land and some scientists hold that the aborigines are the root stock of the Aryan branch of the human family, and, that given a chance, they are mentally, morally, and physically the equals of any other kind of human being.

I would remind Parliamentarians and others who object to the half-castes having a vote that many of the despised class fought in the Great War. Now they are refused a vote, and they are not allowed to enter a public house, even to take shelter from a storm. Sir James Mitchell caused some amusement by a flippant allusion to the national costume of the aborigines. Even that costume might compare favourably with the skins of animals and blue paint with which aboriginal inhabitants of the British Isles dressed themselves. One cannot wonder at the viewpoint of Mr Teesdale and Mr Angelo on anything connected with justice and consideration for the natives. Both were living for years in a town where aborigines went clanking through the streets chained by the neck to wheelbarrows. Mr Teesdale says he will walk out of the House when a half-caste enters it. His threat to walk out of the House seems a huge joke, considering the strenuous efforts he has made to keep his seat. His leaving the House may be an awful calamity or not: it depends on how people regard his merits as a legislator; at any rate, the State would survive his desertion. All will admit that a strong sense of justice is necessary in a member of Parliament. The members mentioned are, on their own showing deficient in the qualities of justice and mercy, so they cannot be first-class statesmen.

Sir James Mitchell asked if the Government wished to encourage the building up of "the unfortunate half-caste class". Unfortunate! Yes, because of the persistent cruelty and injustice of certain people. Before me is a copy of the Aborigines Act, and I have no hesitation in saying that it is a foul blot on the State of Western
Australia, a disgrace to those formulating such Acts, and also to the members of Parliament who were responsible for such Acts becoming law.

I am certain the majority of the people in this State have no idea how cruelly the natives are treated, or that they are outlaws, and that without doing anything to forfeit their rights to live in freedom in their own land, they can be taken from any part of the State and be compelled to live in prison reserves such as that at Mogumber. But why try to make Pariahs of natives in their own land, people with the civilisation of yesterday, struggling amidst adverse conditions to live in the same fields as the whites who have the knowledge gained by thousands of years of civilisation. If the aboriginal must go under, then for humanity's sake give him a fair deal while he is still on the surface.

Yours, Etc.
LETTER FROM WILLIAM HARRIS

TO THE "SUNDAY TIMES", 14 November 1926

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Ever since the whites settled in Western Australia the aborigines have not lived in a more cruel and lawless state than they are living today. Since the inauguration of responsible government their condition has gone from bad to worse, and has now become intolerable.

For hundreds of years, in song and story, it has been Britain's boast that under her flag was found justice and fair dealing for all. But in dealing with the aborigines it has been reserved for Western Australia to overturn British Law and justice and that consideration for the weak and helpless that are recognized and held as due by all really civilized people.

I repeat that there is no law for the aborigines in this state. What law or justice can there be for people who are robbed and shot down, or run into miserable compounds? What part or parcel have they in the land in which they have a right to live in? It is true there are reserves marked on the maps, but of what use are they to the natives when the squatter occupies every acre?

Regarding massacres, heaps of human bones mixed with cartridge shells in different parts of the state appear to me to be evidence of the fact of their having been shot down. Most people hearing of the dispersion of natives think that a few shots are fired over their heads to scatter them. This dispersion takes a different form altogether.

The educated aborigines and half-castes in this state are about to form a protective union. As British subjects they claim, and mean to have, the protection of the same laws that govern the white man, not to be persecuted by the Aborigines Department and its officials.

At Laverton we had the spectacle of natives in that district decoyed into the police station on the pretence of being served with food. The doors were closed on them, they were kept under lock and key until the train was ready to start, then taken under armed escort and locked in the train for Mogumber. I have since heard that the Laverton natives broke gaol and got away, except one who is blind. I don't think that anyone knows or cares if they ever got back.

Mogumber is a mixed settlement on the Moore River, where native men, women and children are forced to live along with murderers and other offenders from all parts of this state. Six of these were made police strutting round in all the glory of a uniform, handcuffs and keys to terrorize the others and keep them in the compound. The place also has gaol cells. Why don't they employ respectable police if they must keep the inmates from running away? At night the women are under lock and key to keep them from clearing off. What a nice
place it must be for women and children to live in. If all are considered prisoners then the men should be kept in another place.

"Broomeite", writing from the Nor'-West, wants the natives to be shut up in reserves because they will kill and disturb cattle so that they look like hunted devils. How about the Natives? It is not certain that they are the hunted devils, trying in vain to get away from the cattle, with an occasional "hurry-up" from the stockman's rifle? Cattle are everywhere fouling the waters, driving off the natives and blotting out their only means of subsistence.

When it is known that the boundaries of a tribe are very limited, can we wonder that desperate, starving natives will at times kill cattle? Those can be punished, but give them a chance to live; don't make their rough, miserable lives worse. Try and win their confidence by kindness; encourage them to work and become useful.

In Melbourne a few days ago Mr Holmes spoke of the dangerous cannibal savages in the North-West. Let me tell Mr Holmes and others that the natives are not the savage and dangerous cannibals he would make out. Of course it must be horribly interesting to people in Melbourne to hear Mr Holmes on cannibalism. It is the correct thing to travelling Nor'-Westers to talk like that.
LETTER FROM NORMAN HARRIS TO JIM BASSETT (A/94/1928)

Now, Jim we are trying to get some of the natives and half-castes together as a deporation to the Premier as you know what for....So that we can get a vote in the country also one law for us all that is the same law that governs the whites also justice for fair play... Uncle Bill is going down to Perth at about the end of the month he is going to Yalgoo now. Uncle Bill is going to have a go at the Aboriginal Department. I think he will smash it up also all these compounds of course he wants help from all the natives and half-castes....If the natives and half-castes pay a little in for him for a lawyer if we can get every one it will run into a few shillings.

Why shouldn't a native have land?
The country belongs to him?
Why segregation in his own land?
Why can't he be allowed in a public Hotel?
Why is he a prisoner in any part of the State?
He can be arrested without a warrant?
Why shouldn't he have a voice in the making of the Laws?
How do they suppose keeping natives in a big reserve?
Why shouldn't a native mother demand Freedom for her child?
Why should the Aboriginal Department put quadroons in Morgumba?
How many Schollars have they turned out of Morgumba?
Why is it that the fairest are to the blackest?
Why is it that all letters are opened before going and out to?
Is it so that all girls and boys are found a job by the Dept?
Is it so that all from their have to send their money back?
Is it so that girls are lock up in Dormytorys?
Does children have to work?
What does their food consist of, I bleave Billy Goats?
Do they encourage young people to come their?
Do they stop card playing and gambling their?
Why does anyone who leaves their have to report his movements?
Why is the Act still over anyone who comes from Morgumba?
Why was those people shifted from Carrollup to Morganbua?
Who has got Carrollup now how much was it sold for?
Who has got the money for it?
I bleave that girls were tied with chains to get punished.
I bleave that girls were made to bend forward while the kick from the behind. Jist fancy that.
Why was the name change to Aboriginal Department from a Chief Protector of Aborigines?
Where does the money go that is set aside for the Aborigines?
APPENDIX IV

The Expenditure of the Aborigines Department

and its Successors, 1898–1936

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>Departmental Expenditure $</th>
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<td>1898</td>
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<td>1899</td>
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<tr>
<td>1900</td>
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<tr>
<td>1901</td>
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<tr>
<td>1902</td>
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<td>1903</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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West Australian

Western Mail
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- Police Circular Order Books:
  - Busselton, Acc. 410, 1907-1937
  - Williams, Acc. 1008, 1901-1921
- Police Court Records:
  - Albany, Acc. 730, 1900-1905
  - Bunbury, Acc. 1339, 1909-1910
  - Esperance, Acc. 783, 1898-1903
  - Katanning, Acc. 710, 1901-1903
  - Narrogin, Acc. 1102, 1900-1910
  - Pingelly, Acc. 1482, 1907-1930
  - Ravensthorpe, Acc. 797, 1900-1940
  - Toodyay, Acc. 721, 1903-1920
  - Wagin, Acc. 713, 1898-1902
  - Williams, Acc. 1467, 1905-1929
  - York, Acc. 1086, 1903-1910
- Police Letter Books:
  - Bunbury, Acc. 988, 1900-1901, 1909-1911
  - Busselton, Acc. 410, 1908-1909, 1920-1925
  - Mount Barker, Acc 427, 1905-1910
  - Pinjarra, Acc. 367, 1906-1924
  - York, Acc. 1141, 1896-1902, 1909-1913
- Police Occurrence Books:
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  - Bridgetown, Acc 673, 1895-1902, 1925-1928
  - Busselton, Acc. 410, 1905-1914
  - Esperance, Acc. 781, 1897-1921
  - Katanning, Acc. 1408, 1924-1925
  - Kojonup, Acc. 418, 1898-1903, 1914-1917
  - Mount Barker, Acc. 427, 1893-1896, 1902-1908
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Gale, C.F.

Goodall, H.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td>Harrison, C.M.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healy, E.</td>
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