

Farewell To Mr. Jenks



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One evening last month, after a presentation ceremony for Mr. Jenks, retiring Manager of La Perouse, a number of visitors were entertained at supper by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Stewart. In this picture, from left to right, are Mrs. V. Fortescue, Mr. Herbie Simms, Mrs. Harold Stewart, Mr. Colin Davis (Editor of Dawn), Mr. Jenks, Mr. V. Fortescue, Mr. Stewart, and Mrs. Inspector English.

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Old Tim was very proud of the confidence I had in him, and he would say to me, "I am not a 'Munjong,' for I have been along Roeburn gaol." Tim had done a term for cattle spearing, and had later been, for a time, a police boy, so he considered himself civilised.

Our aborigines are at their best in the bush, for their bushcraft and knowledge of the bush is almost beyond words. They know everything about the bush. The bush to them is an open book, for their knowledge of tracking and of the habits of animals, is so vast that they are able to know almost everything that has happened.

Indeed it is almost impossible to tell in cold words to city bred people, who have never had any bush experience, what wonderful bushmen our aborigines are for nothing is hidden from them. I know all this, for I have been out for days, with three or four aborigines, walking up and down the great Obagooma hills on the rugged Kimberley coast, looking for rock holes, springs and for the tracks of wild cattle.



Then in the nights as we camped around the little fire, the aboriginal boys would tell me in tones of reverence, many of their wonderful myths and age-old legends. They would also show the sacred rock holes, where the "dream children," the departed spirits of dead aborigines play and sing, and wait for opportunities to reincarnate.

But these days are gone, and there are no "Munjongs" in Kimberley now and the bush aborigines have been absorbed by the various government and church missions.

Times have changed for me too, for here I am now engaged in trying to help these people of aboriginal blood, in this State, to become good Australian citizens.

All we members of the Board realise that the white people have a stern social duty towards the aborigines, for it would not have been possible to pioneer much of Australia, without the wonderful aid they gave in years gone by. Aborigines are wonderful stockmen and drovers, as I have found during the many years I worked with them.

The aborigines of the lighter castes, make good truck drivers, mechanics and tradesmen and can take their places in the world of modern industry. It is not that the aborigines lack the intelligence, but many of them become victims of the vices of low class whites, and so lose the incentive and persistence to become good, sober and useful citizens.

It is my hope that all persons of aboriginal blood will co-operate with the Board and its policy of assimilation, and take their place in the world alongside their white brothers and sisters.