

Informal adult education can include activities ranging from talks by, for example, doctors and nursing sisters, to recreational groups such as choirs and repertory societies.

Housing: Aborigines can be encouraged to improve their standards of housing. Fundamentally, this is a matter of education. In the tribe aborigines had no houses as we know them. They have to be educated to the proper standards and uses of houses, assisted to furnish them, guided in the maintenance of them.

To own or rent a home, to furnish it, and to maintain it, involves real effort in the economic framework. Work in housing, therefore, cannot be isolated from employment and employment capacity.

Employment: For the time being at least, employers should be encouraged to adopt as liberal an attitude as possible to aborigines; to give them at least an opportunity to fit themselves into the economic pattern. This should go beyond merely considering aboriginal applicants for jobs; aborigines should be encouraged to become applicants for jobs. Similarly, they may need guidance in obtaining jobs for which they are fitted or for which, with co-operation and on-the-job experience, they may soon become fitted.

Social Behaviour: A difficult, perhaps embarrassing, but essential activity is to educate aborigines in the fundamentals of social behaviour to ensure their full acceptance into the community at large. As well as in health and hygiene, this includes guidance in respect of such widely-separated matters as diet, budgeting the household income, planning and provision for the future, spiritual comfort, and the proper enjoyment of leisure.

Sport and Recreations: Probably no other sphere offers such opportunities for real advancement as sport and recreation. Aborigines have shown themselves to be outstanding sportsmen, particularly in athletics, boxing and football. Sporting clubs can offer them the opportunity, not merely to excel as sportsmen, but to achieve equality, in fellowship with other members of the community, and self-respect.

THE PROBLEM OF TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE

Aborigines and part-aborigines cannot be left entirely to their own resources; nor can they benefit from such a superfluity of welfare measures that no initiative, no effort, no struggle is necessary on their part. This latter alternative can lead only to complete loss of self-respect, and doom the aborigines to an ignominious extinction.

The objective of Government legislation and Administrative practice is to equip aborigines to take their place in the modern world; and this is a world of effort, ambition and endeavour—a technological, material world very different from the aboriginal cultural background.



Aborigines need a helping hand during this difficult stage of their transition. At this stage the help needs to be generous, tempered by patience and understanding.

SOME SUCCESSFUL ABORIGINES

Although co-operation is essential to assist the vast majority of aborigines and part aborigines to progress, there are many today who—sometimes largely by their own efforts, sometimes with the generous help of other Australians—have established for themselves an honoured place in our community. Their deeds may not always be as spectacular as those of Pte. T. Hughes or Neighbour, or as well known as those of Albert Namatjira, but their achievements are, in some ways just as remarkable.

Among these is Harry Penrith, who was brought up at the N.S.W. Aborigines' Welfare Board Boys' Training School, at Kinchela near Kempsey. He reached Leaving Certificate standard at Kempsey High School and became a clerk in the N.S.W. Department of Agriculture. He is now on the staff of the Wagga Agricultural College. He is an all-round sportsman and a keen Rugby Union player. When he was living in Sydney he started a tennis club for young aborigines to help them achieve self-confidence, individuality and a sense of responsibility.

In the field of artistic entertainment such men as Jimmy Little and Harold Blair have been outstanding by any standards. When Jimmy Little was 14 he bought a guitar from money he had earned picking peas. After much practice, he appeared at small concerts and socials. Following an appearance on the "Amateur Hour", he became a popular singer at clubs, dances and parties. Today he is one of the most popular radio and television entertainers, and has been engaged by an American film producer to play the second male lead in the technicolour film, "Shadow of a Boomerang", to be released in October this year. He is married and has a small daughter. He is a keen reader and enthusiastic sportsman. His ambition is to prove that original Australians can take a place at the top of their chosen occupations.

Harold Blair, the well-known baritone, also won early acclaim through the "Amateur Hour".