

FAMILY EDUCATION CENTRES PLANNED AT EVANS HEAD COURSE

Results of Australia's first pre-school training course for Aborigines will depend on the amount of effort made by Aborigines to successfully establish family education centres. Two of the team of six Maori women who conducted the course said this before returning to New Zealand.

About fifty Aboriginal people from the Lismore area attended the course, which was held at Evans Head late in May. The course was arranged by the Aboriginal adult education section of Sydney University, and the N.S.W. Aborigines Welfare Board.

The *Lismore Star* newspaper reported that the Maori women said they were hopeful the Aborigines would continue to help train themselves to a better way of life.

The Maori women followed up with "on the job" training at three district Aboriginal reserves—Box Ridge, near Coraki, Tabulam, and Wood-enbong.

The women will continue to direct the Aborigines from New Zealand, with the assistance of Sydney University.

Committees have been formed for each of the three reserves to run Aboriginal family education centres. These centres are similar to Maori centres. One function is to help mothers to observe their children's needs.

There are about 80 children at Box Ridge reserve of 135 residents. About half of them are expected to attend the centre.

Play centre

The Maoris and Aborigines, including Aborigines Welfare Board member, Mr J. Morgan, cleared a large area of "wilderness" and began the building of a play centre.

The Maori women at Box Ridge, Mesdames K. H. Campbell and Pearl Allen appealed to district residents to help by giving equipment such as toys, dolls, puzzles, and children's books.

Eventually they hope the centre will be similar to other Australian pre-school kindergartens, only with the whole family involved.

Mrs Allen said the children had been bright and eager to learn. They were particularly skilled with their hands.

Mrs Campbell said Aborigines needed constructive help, not dictation.

The women wanted to know more about cooking, sewing, knitting, and other crafts, but did not know who to approach. Women's organizations, such as the C.W.A., might be able to demonstrate to them.

Workshops

Reserve workshops, where the men could learn skills such as carpentry, was another idea.

The Maori women presented the Aborigines with \$4—the first donation towards equipment for a play centre building. The Aborigines raised \$10 themselves.

Mrs Lena Kapeen said a reserve council also had been formed at Box Ridge on a co-operative basis. Usual meeting attendance was about seventeen persons. When an Aborigine had put in \$20 he would become a full member.

Market garden

The money will be used to establish a market garden on the reserve.

Water is laid on and the men will begin clearing the ground during the winter. Proceeds will be used to buy equipment and the first distribution of profit was expected to be made in five years.

Wife of the part-time reserve supervisor, Mrs E. R. Leggo, said she was prepared to go to the reserve more often to help the women learn to renovate clothes which were given to them.

Mrs Leggo assists the United Aboriginal Missionary, Mrs Cyril Smith, on Sunday with Christian education work.

Mr Leggo said there was district discrimination against Aborigines when it came to getting jobs. Unless an Aborigine was well known, he was not likely to get a job if a white man also applied.

Two hotels at Coraki only let a few Aborigines drink there. "You can't blame them, because the others get into fights when drinking", he added.

Mr Leggo said the reserve Aborigines had been particularly well behaved. Even after drinking they had never shown any violence towards him.

There was a few of the "no-hoper brigade" as in every community, who gave the majority a bad name, he added.