

The Aboriginal History Project

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FUTURE OF ABORIGINES.

STATE NOT SUGGESTED.

FEB 12 1929

"PROPOSAL IMPRACTICABLE."

CANBERRA, Monday. — Through an error in the preparation of the report of the chief protector of aborigines in Queensland (Mr. J. W. Bleakley) in the Prime Minister's department last week, it was stated in the summary prepared officially that Mr. Bleakley had recommended the creation of a native State for aborigines. Mr. Bleakley was commissioned by the Federal Ministry to investigate the condition of blacks in North and Central Australia.

The Minister for Home Affairs (Mr. Abbott) said to-day that proposals advanced by organisations interested in aborigines on which Mr. Bleakley had been asked to report had been quoted in the official summary as Mr. Bleakley's recommendations. Actually Mr. Bleakley had expressed the opinion that the proposal for a native State was impracticable, and showed a lack of administrative experience of the characteristics and limitations of the blacks. It proposed to thrust upon them a social machine which they could not understand. No tribe had any interest outside its distinct associations, and an elected tribunal interfering with the government of a tribe would cause bitter resentment.

The suggestion for the complete segregation of wandering tribes, Mr. Bleakley had said, was excellent in theory, but could not be put into practice without causing ruthless disintegration of tribal life. Wholesale herding into reserves in strange country would be unwise. The proposal for cattle stations for aborigines missed most of the essentials of institutions for the betterment of a primitive people. Compulsory general education of children and the education of adults in citizenship were impracticable.

Unless an aboriginal advisory board were composed of persons with expert scientific or administrative knowledge of the blacks it would be of little value. To be effective such a board should include a trained anthropologist, a medical expert in native diseases, and officers and missionaries experienced in administration among the blacks. It was important that the records of a fast dying race should be preserved.