

The Aboriginal History Project

Newspaper Archive

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Aborigines Ask For Full Citizen Rights

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To obtain support for aborigines in Victoria for an attempt to obtain full citizens' rights, the organising secretary of the Aborigines' Progressive Association of New South Wales (Mr W. Ferguson) is in Melbourne.

Mr Ferguson's association believes the Aborigines' Protection Board oppresses rather than protects, and it seeks the abolition of the Board and of all existing legislation concerning aborigines.

There were 80,000 aborigines in Australia and 10,000 in New South Wales, Mr Ferguson said. A higher standard of education for them was sought. Aborigines were provided by the Board with education only to the 3rd class. Aborigines were forced to exist on rations for 2/3 a week for adults in La Perouse, 2/10 at Wellington, and from 3/2 to 3/4 at other places. Twenty-five years ago, when food was cheaper, the allowance was 4/6 on most of the reserves. The Board had reduced it to the 3/2 average today.

WAITED 150 YEARS

The 2/6 food allowance a week for the child came from the Child Endowment money. Aborigines must pay 8 for blankets that should be issued free, and men must do 11 hours work a week, mostly digging and improving homesteads, for their rations.

"We have waited 150 years for the white people to do something for the colored people, and now we are taking action ourselves," said Mr Ferguson. "We have been left behind in the march of progress. We have the right to full education, and we demand it."

Public opinion in New South Wales had been stirred by the appeal of his association.