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THE ABORIGINES' FRIENDS' ASSOCIATION

AND

THE NGARRINDJERI PEOPLE

by

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CHAPTER VI. YEARS OF CLIMAX AND DECLINE (1889-1911)

The Staff at Raukkan

Eleven men, including Charles Eaton Taplin (another of George Taplin's sons), applied for the position of superintendent at Raukkan when Frederick Taplin died, but the A.F.A. Committee recommended the appointment of David Blackwell, the acting superintendent,[1] and accordingly Blackwell became superintendent as from 1 May 1889.[2] The new incumbent had been farm overseer continuously since 1879, and also for a previous period, during which he had married one of George Taplin's daughters.

The first reaction of the Ngarrindjeri (who hadn't been consulted in the matter) was similar to their reaction over Frederick Taplin's appointment: they objected strongly. Mark Wilson, then aged nineteen, and already developing as a spokesman for the people, was deputed to write a letter of protest on behalf of the Ngarrindjeri.[3] The two major objections which the people of Raukkan had to Blackwell, were firstly his lack of medical knowledge and his inability as a physician; and secondly his severe limitations as a religious leader. There were no moral objections to Blackwell, who appears to have been an upright, mechanically capable, but somewhat taciturn and uninspiring individual. Even Frederick Taplin had been a competent doctor, whereas Blackwell appears to have had little experience in this field which the Ngarrindjeri considered, quite rightly, to be a most important one.

It is interesting to observe the different sets of priorities which motivated the two groups of people: the Ngarrindjeri leaders on Raukkan, and the A.F.A. Committee in Adelaide. The Ngarrindjeri, in lodging their protests over the appointments of

both the second and third superintendents, were principally concerned with moral and religious issues (with the health of the people also considered). But the Committee, in making the appointments, were concerned almost solely with the practical questions: how good a farmer is he? how efficient is the man as a mechanic? George Taplin had observed twenty five years previously that the Ngarrindjeri had always been steeped in religion, and once they adopted Christianity they became completely dedicated Christians. They did not now want someone who was a competent fellmonger as a pastor: they wanted a competent preacher — and there were several among their own ranks who were extremely capable in this regard. The question might well be asked as to who needed the missionary — the Ngarrindjeri at Raukkan, or the grinkaris in Adelaide?

The only reaction which Mark Wilson's letter elicited from the Committee was that they decided to put on a show of strength and to send a deputation to Raukkan to formally install Blackwell.[4] This, in turn, evoked a further letter from Mark Wilson on the leaders' behalf, questioning the wisdom of the Committee's course of action.[5] However, the matter ended there, for the secretary, C.N. Collison, 'declined to reply', and the Committee supported his action (or inaction) in this regard.[6] The Committee deemed it to be beneath their dignity to enter into such correspondence with an Aborigine, and such a stand indicates a serious flaw in their attitude. This was an attitude which did no more than reflect the popular opinion of the times, but it would have been reasonable to have hoped that the Aborigines' Friends' Association might have risen above the current attitudes, and to have developed a relationship of

true friendship with the group of Aborigines with which it had been associated now for thirty years. Perhaps it is expecting too much of the Committee to observe that there were several outstanding men of the Ngarrindjeri who had proved that they were capable of carrying out the duties of superintendent and pastor at Raukkan; and that the time was ripe for the A.F.A. to allow the Ngarrindjeri to resume the responsibility of conducting their own affairs in a grinkari-dominated world. However, it should not have been beyond reasonable expectations to have looked for some form of Ngarrindjeri participation in selecting a replacement for Frederick Taplin. Congregational church councils do have a say in the choice of their pastors, and it would have been entirely in accord with contemporary practice for the deacons of the Church at Raukkan to have at least been represented at the meeting of the Committee which decided who was to be the next pastor of their church. Such was not to be; and the Committee arrogantly proceeded to impose a spiritual and temporal 'leader' on the Ngarrindjeri, with no concern at all for the feelings of the people themselves. Sadly enough, David Blackwell was almost certainly a well-meaning, kindly, and morally upright man; but events had conspired to place him in a position to which he was not really suited.

By April 1892, the situation had deteriorated to the extent that the Committee was forced to send a deputation to Raukkan to investigate the trouble.[7] It was at this late stage that they at last sought the opinion of the elders. The elders simply stated what they had pointed out prior to Blackwell's appointment — that he was incompetent to lead spiritually, and that he was of limited help to the people medically. Ironically enough, the committee members who

comprised the deputation agreed with them, and reported accordingly.[8] As a consequence of the sub-committee's report, David Blackwell resigned his position on 17 April[9] but the Committee refused to accept his resignation, postponing consideration of it until September. In the meantime they sent a further deputation to Raukkan to try to uphold Blackwell's tattered authority.[10] By October, Blackwell had been persuaded not to resign at all, and his resignation was officially 'expunged from the minutes'.[11] This decision probably cost him his life, for a little over two months later (on 2 January 1893) he had a heart attack and died, leaving a widow, and eight children all under fifteen.[12]

One of Blackwell's last acts was indicative of his inadequacy as an administrator. He complained to the Committee that C.G. Gregory, the head teacher who had replaced Walter Hutley, was too old and incomptetent. The Committee accordingly decided to sack Gregory, and told Blackwell to give him three months' notice,[13] while they in turn proceeded to appoint a new teacher. But Blackwell failed to carry out his instructions, with the result that Gregory was unaware that he had been dismissed until he learned that there was a new head teacher[14] — with consequent embarrassment to all concerned. David Blackwell, like Frederick Taplin before him, proved conclusively that the Ngarrindjeri elders were much more perceptive judges of men than were the Committee of the A.F.A.; and his superintendency proved to be a sad vindication of the stand the elders had taken when he was first appointed in 1889. Yet, if this fact dawned on the Committee, they failed to mention it in any of their records, or to be guided by it in making future decisions.

YEARS OF CLIMAX AND DECLINE (1899-1911).

T.M. Sutton, who had been superintendent at Point Pearce for thirteen years, was appointed to succeed David Blackwell, and he took up his post in mid 1893. He was to be the first of many who went to Raukkan after service at the sister mission, until the position of superintendent was finally abolished eighty years later. Frederick Leak, a clergyman, followed him in 1898, but lasted only a little over a year before resigning, to be replaced by F.W. Garnett (1900-05). And finally Ambrose Redman, who became farm overseer when Blackwell vacated the position in 1889, was promoted to the superintendency in 1906. He remained the superintendent until 1912.

Except for the years 1897-1903, when he was not in the employ of the A.F.A., the one constant factor throughout this critical twenty three year period was the presence at Raukkan of Ambrose Redman, in one capacity or another; and the contribution this man made as a genuine friend of the people is only surpassed by that of George Taplin himself. He had an enormous capacity for hard work, and although he left behind no journal to give an intimate insight into the lives of the people, and he wrote no scholarly anthropological or linguistic studies, yet he was clearly as strong, generous, compassionate and loyal a friend, as any people could wish to have. When he resigned in January 1912, the population at Raukkan was nearly double what it was in 1889 — yet such was the spirit and energy of this man that he was by this time carrying two jobs — that of farm overseer and superintendent (but not of course two salaries)! When it is considered how many roles were already incorporated in the position of superintendent, it is difficult to see

how Ambrose Redman survived, but he did. And because he had the confidence and the affection of the Ngarrindjeri, their achievements throughout this period were considerable. Even today, Ngarrindjeri descendants who never knew Redman, know that he was a 'good man' and a true friend to their forebears.

Religion

As was to be expected, there was no significant religious revival when David Blackwell took over as pastor of the Church at Raukkan. The first entry in the Church Book after Frederick Taplin's death is indicative of the feeling amongst the people at the time:

> ...much sorrow was felt at the coldness in the church and ill feeling as manifested by the number absenting themselves from the worship of God and the Lord's Table.[15]

But while the spiritual life of the church may have appeared dormant, the physical aspect of constructing the transept and lengthening the chapel (initiated during Frederick Taplin's pastorship) was proceeded with energetically. In July 1890, the tender of R.J. Blackwell (a relative of the superintendent) was accepted for the entire job.[16] However, to their credit, the finance sub-committee of the A.F.A. withdrew their acceptance the following month, and while allowing R.J. Blackwell to retain the contract for carpentry and roofing, they accepted William MacHughes's offer to construct the masonry, at three shillings and sixpence per yard.[17] William MacHughes completed the masonry in January 1891[18] and on 29 and 30 March of that year the chapel, complete with dispensary, library, and increased seating, was officially reopened.[19] The Ngarrindjeri had also raised the necessary finance to have a memorial tablet to

YEARS OF CLIMAX AND DECLINE (1899-1911).

George Taplin imbedded in the chapel wall, and during the official speeches, both John Sumner and William MacHughes made reference to the work and life of the man to whom it was dedicated. About three hundred people were at the two-day series of ceremonies, a hundred and twnety of whom had come across from Milang in a specially hired steamer.[20]

After Blackwell's death, the religious life at Raukkan revived, and under the four remaining superintendents in this period it flourished. Almost immediately on taking up the position, T.M. Sutton convened an election for the Church council, so that it then comprised four grinkaris: himself, Ambrose Redman (then farm overseer), William Holman (the head teacher) and G.G. Hacket (the manager of Narrung Station): and six Ngarrindjeri men, namely, William MacHughes, John Sumner, Philip Rigney, Matthew Kropinyeri and (most significantly) William Kropinyeri and James Ngunaitponi.[21] These last two, by now elderly men, had simply not been mentioned in connection with church work or administration since George Taplin's death, and the inference is clear that at last the Church had a pastor whom they considered to be worth supporting. Sutton publicised an invitation to all old members to 'unite again in Church Fellowship',[22] and many availed themselves of the opportunity. The new pastor also reinstated the term 'deacon' to replace 'councillor', so that in 1893, the two old foundation members once again became deacons of the Church they had helped to establish about thirty years before.

By 1895 the rejuvenation of the Church at Raukkan was so pronounced that there were no less than seven auxilliary organiza-

tions connected with it (in addition to the Church council). These were: the Sunday School, the Young Men's Bible Class, the Mutual Improvement Society, the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour, the Band of Hope, the Glee Club, and the Mothers' Work Meeting.[23] These bodies varied in the ratio of their spiritual to temporal concern, but while all were religiously orientated, they nevertheless were of true practical help to many of the Ngarrindjeri, who were assisted through them to acquire further education in a variety of fields, and to acquire such skills as public speaking, chairmanship, debating, research and scholarship etc. which were to serve them in good stead for the rest of their lives.

The conduct of the Church in general seems to have been raised (as it should have been) above the 'missionary' approach. In 1897 Sutton was able to report:

> Our Church and Deacons' meetings are being held and generally on those lines we move along as in other communities composed of Europeans.[24]

The evangelical work continued to flourish as it had always done away from Raukkan, and it was so strong by 1903 that A.P. Bowman was moved to donate a portable organ for the use of the Ngarrindjeri evangelists in the camps and shearing sheds. Unfortunately, to my knowledge, no description of one of these religious meetings exists; but knowing the religous fervour of the preachers, and the love of singing and warm vitality of the congregations, such a meeting, lit by kerosene lamps and candles in one of the big Lakes shearing sheds, must have been an exciting and inspiring affair.

The School and the Children

Over the period 1889-1911, the numbers of children at the

school grew and then declined, and the parabola that was thus described was symbolic of much that occurred at Raukkan during the period. The general tendency, until 1908, was for the school to become increasingly like a normal state school (apart from its boarding facilities) but from then on there is a marked decline in standards and expected levels of achievement.

Even in the eighties, the A.F.A. had been asking the Education Department to inspect and report on the school,[25] and although the Chief Inspector had arranged an occasional visit, there was still no commitment by the Education Department to maintain continuing oversight of the school until 1894.[26] In this year the school, after operating continuously for thirty-four years, was officially recognised by the Education Department, while the A.F.A., for its part, began to take measures designed to bring the school more into line with Departmental schools elsewhere in the province.

From April 1893, normal school holidays were to be observed:[27] previously the school had operated on a pattern which was determined by the pattern of life on the station — the break during the shearing season and so on. No doubt there were advantages in changing over to the state system but it also had disadvantages which the old, more natural organization, did not incur. In September of the same year, 1893, an injunction was sent by the Committee to Raukkan, stating that the children must be prevented from leaving school to go with their parents during the shearing season.[28] And in November of 1893, a quite draconian rule was passed by the Committee, to the effect that any parents whose children did not regularly attend Day School, Sunday School, and reli-

gious services, were liable to be expelled from the station.[29]

With the numbers of children beginning to increase, and with Departmental inspectors visiting Raukkan on a regular basis, it was apparent that the present small and dilapidated school building was quite inadequate. Accordingly, a deputation sent by the A.F.A., recommended in their report that the school building should be given to the matron and a new one built.[30] The Education Department refused to assist in the building of the new school on the grounds that Religious Education was an inherent part of the course, and the education offered could not therefore be described as free and secular.[31] However, the Ngarrindjeri went ahead and built the new school room entirely by themselves; including masonry, carpentry and joinery. The new building was 40½ feet by 20½ feet and was thus of ample size to comfortably accommodate the seventy four children on the roll. In November of 1895, the Advertiser's Raukkan correspondent, Matthew Kropinyeri, wrote an article which said, inter alia:

> On Thursday the 21st inst., a meeting was held in connection with the opening of the new school. .... After singing of a hymn and prayer, Mr M.H. Madge was voted to the chair, and he, in a very appropriate speech, pointed out the advantages of education &c. Mr J. Sumner, one of the first school boys at the founding of the mission, then spoke of his experiences in connection with the mission and drew a very striking contrast of things past and present in reference to the work carried on at this place. .... Mr M.H. Madge suitably responded and declared the school open. In the evening, a magic lantern exhibition was exhibited by Mr T.M. Sutton when a goodly number of views were thrown upon the screen, the schoolboys and the glee club singing at intervals.[32]

The building of the new school; the conduct of the meeting with its speeches, votes of thanks and singing; and the report of the

Advertiser's Ngarrindjeri correspondent, were all, in their own way, a modest triumph for the Ngarrindjeri and the education system at Raukkan which had made such achievements possible.

The whole educational aim of the A.F.A. was still directed towards assimilation, so that as the school became more like any other school in the State, the Committee tended to view this as true progress. The attitude of the A.F.A. towards the movement away from what was left of the Ngarrindjeri traditions, was stated explicitly by a Committee member, George Crase, during a visit to Raukkan:

> I have also noticed the absence of native language among the children, thus showing both what civilization and Christianity can do.[33]

The more positive side of their approach manifested itself in frequent observations that the Ngarrindjeri children were just as intelligent and capable as European children in other schools. The inspector conducted his examination of the school in precisely the same way in which other schools were inspected and examined, and the results of these examinations showed that what perceptive visitors had been asserting for some time, had been correct. A typical comment in the Visitors' Book is that of W.T. Kench, who wrote in 1890:

> Spent an hour in the School. Very favourably impressed. The work done compares favourably with that of many of our State Schools.[34]

Governor Sir T. Fowell Buxton visited the station in 1896, and he too was impressed by all he saw, including the school. He told a Register reporter on his return to Adelaide:

> Their writing in the copy books and so on seemed very clear and good. It is said that in an ordinary examination by a school inspector they show as good results as do children in the average State school. The black ones are said to do as well as the half-castes.[35]

YEARS OF CLIMAX AND DECLINE (1889-1911).

William Holman served as head teacher for a decade — from 1893 to 1902 inclusive — and made an outstanding contribution at Raukkan in the field of music — both adult and juvenile. His work as a teacher was also satisfactory in his early years, although he had not been in the profession prior to taking up his appointment at Raukkan. However, by 1900 his character seems to have deteriorated for some reason that will probably not now be known, and at the Committee meeting of March that year, a petition signed by twenty five Ngarrindjeri was tabled, asking for Holman's removal.[36] Investigations proved that the Ngarrindjeri were (as usual) correct in their assertions, and Holman was reprimanded for being too harsh in his punishment.[37] But he was not removed. However, in November of 1902, Francis Garnett, who was then the superintendent, requested that Holman should be dismissed, and a deputation was again sent to investigate the situation.[38] In the following month a mordant report from Mr Inspector Smyth (who had also gone to Raukkan to examine the school and the teacher) convinced the A.F.A. that Holman would have to go.[39] Accordingly Holman 'resigned', but his replacement, William Chapman, only lasted one year (1903) before he was struck down by an epileptic fit from which he never recoverd.[40]

The appointment of Patrick Francis to the position of head teacher at the commencement of the 1904 school year, brought a change in direction and policy to education at Raukkan. For the first time, an Education Department teacher was appointed on terms which did not require him to resign from the Department. In fact, the school became a Departmental institution, with the one distinction that the A.F.A. were obliged to pay the head teacher's salary

and the other costs involved — estimated to be about £250 per annum, all told.[41]

Francis was most critical of the state of affairs at the school, claiming that all the children were backward; and complaining (quite rightly) of a chronic lack of amenities. Amongst other deficiencies, there was no shelter shed, there were no lavatories, and there were insufficient desks for the seventy four children now on the roll.[42] Francis set about raising the standard of education to its previous high level, while the Ngarrindjeri and the Government did their best to rectify some of the other problems. In 1905, the workmen built a shelter shed next to the school, while the newly elected 'lib-lab' government under the premiership of Tom Price (who was also Minister for Education) took over the complete cost of running the school.[43] From 1 July 1905, the school at Raukkan became a state school on the same footing as every other public school in South Australia.

By 1905, despite the increase in enrolments, the average proportional attendance of the children was the best in the State,[44] thus demonstrating the effectiveness of the policy regarding compulsory attendance throughout the year. In that year, two other significant events occurred: Francis instituted a fifth class (the highest public school class at that time), and the school building which the Ngarrindjeri had constructed only ten years before, was destroyed by fire. The school was rebuilt the following year (1906) again by Ngarrindjeri tradesmen, but with Government assistance,[45] and this building is still in use in 1975 as part of the present school.

The school continued to be rated 'good' or 'very good' by

the inspector each year, but in 1908 there was a decline in educational standards forced on the teacher by the ill-health of the children. There had been an alarming rise in the mortality rate and an increase in sickness at Raukkan in recent years, and in 1905-6 the number of deaths passed the number of births for the first time since 1893. In 1905 there were seventeen deaths to fifteen births; in 1906 there were nineteen deaths to fifteen births; and in 1907 there was a record of thirty deaths to thirteen births, in a population of slightly less than 300 — which means that over 10% of the people died in that one year.[46] Many of these deaths were among the children, and Dr Ramsay Smith, who was President of the Central Board of Health, visited the station to investigate the causes. Amongst other recommendations, he advised that the school hours should be shortened and the standards lowered, as the children were, he claimed, being 'overtaxed'.[47] The Education Department implemented his suggestions in 1909; and in 1910, a further inroad was made on the achievement possibilities of the children, when books and slates were abolished in an effort to check consumption, which was still a major source of ill-health and death. Loose paper, which could be destroyed at the end of each day, became the only material used for reading and writing in the school.[48] These measures were designed with the best of intentions, for the Aborigines have had few stronger advocates than Ramsay Smith. Nevertheless, from that time on, the expected levels of attainment at Raukkan were to decline, and inspectors were to make allowance in their reports for the fact that the children were 'only Aborigines'. P.W. Francis, while he remained in control, opposed the decline to the best of

his ability, and even in 1910, despite the shorter hours and limited material, he was able to report that the children were 'holding their own' when compared with others in the district, and at the Lake Albert shows, had taken out sixteen prizes that year.[49]

Under the 1909 Government regulations, Aboriginal children were not supposed to proceed past the third class, but Francis refused to hold back the Ngarrindjeri children who could, of course, cope as well as European children with the fourth and fifth levels. Numerically, the school children declined from seventy eight in 1904 to forty in 1912 — which constitutes a reduction of nearly 50% in eight years. The figures show an even more dramatic decline in the number of boarders, but this was a decline caused mainly by financial difficulties. Previously most children had been boarders — including those whose parents lived in cottages — but in 1900, the Committee decided that henceforth, only orphans and girls under the care of the matron should be allowed in the dormitory.[50] By 1909 there were thus only sixteen in the dormitory out of a total of forty eight on the roll, and by 1912, the number had been further reduced to seven out of forty one.[51] It seems quite probable that these economy measures regarding the dormitory could well have contributed substantially to the health problems at Raukkan, for in previous years the little cottages had been able to cope tolerably as family homes, only because all the children above the age of five normally lived in the dormitories. When these children were turned back into the cottages, the overcrowding for many families must have been chronic.

YEARS OF CLIMAX AND DECLINE (1899-1911).

The Station

Farming operations during these two decades began with great optimism, as it was hoped that irrigation might prove to be the medium by which the A.F.A. could be rescued from its financial difficulties, and by which the Ngarrindjeri would find employment. Under the wise guidance of Ambrose Redman, it cannot be denied that substantial and very worthwhile advances were made, but none of the schemes was ever to reach the stage where full employment or self sufficiency was achieved at Raukkan.

Early in his term as overseer, Redman organised the planting of 400 forest trees, between 400 and 500 fig and other fruit trees, and 500 vine cuttings. The Ngarrindjeri masons and workmen built hundreds of yards of stone aqueducts to take the lake water to suitable soil, and in 1890, six acres of lucerne and twelve acres of maize was grown under irrigation. The latter produced 200 bushels which fetched five shillings a bushel.[52] The new irrigation scheme had got away to a promising start.

In mid 1891, the well-known vigneron, Thomas Hardy, visited Raukkan to advise Redman on the suitability of site and soil for growing vines. He recommended planting 1,000 currants, 1,000 assorted other vines and also some almond trees. Hardy personally donated 1,000 vines himself.[53] That year, Redman and his workers planted 1,000 currants, 1,000 raisins and table varieties, plus almonds, olive truncheons, fruit trees, and a further batch of 845 forest trees.[54] Difficulty was experienced with the vines and many perished, but the farmers persevered with them, replacing those that died, until, after three years, the vines finally began to

establish themselves in 1894. By 1897 their growth was able to be described as 'vigorous', and in 1898 two tons of excellent grapes were harvested.[55]

Of the fruit trees, only the figs seem to have thrived at Raukkan, but others were nevertheless maintained. The forest trees planted were mostly Eucalyptus cladocalyx (Sugar Gums) and foreign pines, and although these apparently grew quite readily (some are still to be seen about the village), most of them probably became firewood only a few years after they were planted. The wattles (probably Acacia pycnantha) proved to be a financial success, and as early as 1893 ten tons of wattle bark was harvested, and it realized £6-5-0 per ton.[56]

By 1893, the pattern of irrigation had become established, and Redman's report gives the following acreages (in addition to 22 acres of hay): vines — 5 acres; peas — 9 acres; kitchen garden — 2 acres; wattles — 48 acres; and fruit trees — 3 acres.[57] This was all very pleasing — particularly the 2 acres of kitchen garden, which must have contributed significantly to maintaining the health of the school boarders — but it was a far cry from the original concept of an extensive irrigation settlement at Raukkan, made up of independent Ngarrindjeri fruit blockers. Later on, when a dairy industry was proposed, about 30 acres of lucerne were also grown,[58] but this was to be the extent of the irrigation project. In fact it was to remain limited enough for the steam engine to be abandoned in favour of a couple of windmills, which were much less expensive to run, but hardly the machinery for a flourishing irrigation system.[59]

Perhaps it is just as well that the irrigation project did

not become established as it had been originally envisaged, for there would have been a great deal of money lost, and a large number of disappointed Ngarrindjeri fruit blockers. 1902 was a drought year, but under normal conditions this would simply have meant that the Lake would have been low during the summer months. However, due to the diversion of Upper Murray tributaries, and vast quantities of water being taken for irrigation purposes in New South Wales and Victoria, there wasn't the usual force of water coming down, and as a result, the salt water began to move up the Lower Murray and to take over Lake Alexandrina. This naturally caused great concern among all those dependent on the waters of the Lake — from fishermen to squatters. At Raukkan, irrigation was brought to a halt, as was that very important occupation — wool-washing; for both of these industries required large quantities of good, fresh water.

The Murray Water Commissioners came to investigate the problem, and a meeting of all those concerned was arranged with the Commissioners at Milang on 28 May 1902.[60] Francis Garnett, the superintendent, attended this meeting, and later reported that the main positive proposal was for the construction of a weir at the Murray Mouth.[61] Eventually this suggestion was to be acted upon, but it was not to be until many years after the A.F.A. had severed its intimate links with the Ngarrindjeri. In the meantime, life and work at Raukkan had to continue, despite the fact that, even in a good year, the Lake water was salty and unuseable for eight months out of twelve. Good reserves of underground water were discovered in the village; wells were sunk and the windmills were shifted from the

lakeside to new sites atop the wells.[62] This enabled people and stock to obtain sufficient water, with enough over to provide for the watering of some plants. Dairying was maintained and went from a humble beginning in 1898 to a point ten years later when it was able to supply all the station needs for milk and butter; and make over £100 in doing so.[63] But woolwashing and extensive irrigation were out of the question.

During the period there was a continuous effort on the part of the A.F.A. Committee to try to obtain more land, and to a limited extent, they were successful. However, their exertions were complicated and a little sullied by their dealings in land, and by their sub-leasing of land which they already held. All of this was done with the best of intentions and the purest of motives — that is, to make the best possible financial use of the land, in order to get the best return for the Association, and hence for the Ngarrindjeri. But it did make the A.F.A. vulnerable to attack by insinuation — especially when one of the chief sub-lessees was T.R. Bowman, a member of the Association; and it also made the Government's lack of cooperation in not providing a decent stretch of land, easy to justify.

The problem facing the Committee was a simple one. Unlike Point Pearce, Poonindie, and Koonibba, Raukkan did not have a single large area available for development. When the Government did grant it additional land, it was either in tiny, unworkable blocks, or else it was stony or sandy ground, useful only as light grazing country. The little blocks were not capable of supporting a family, but they could be worked quite profitably in conjunction with a

bigger farm, and hence they were of some value to neighbouring farmers, but of practically no value to the Ngarrindjeri or the A.F.A.. The Committee, logically enough, decided that, rather than leave the little blocks idle to be overrun by rabbits, it would be preferable to sub-lease them to grinkari farmers whose properties were contiguous. At least in this way they received some financial benefit.

If the position was frustrating for the Committee, it was even more so for many of the Ngarrindjeri, who were desperate to get hold of some of their own country and to live independent lives. Farming was the obvious answer to their problems of lack of employment, and racial discrimination, but there was no point in a man building a cottage on a block of land and taking his family out to it, if, even in the best of seasons, he had to leave them stranded there for extended periods, while he wandered the countryside looking for employment so that he could feed them. It was better that they should have the security of a home, friends, medical treatment, rations and a school at Raukkan. If only the blocks had been of a size to make farming viable, this would have made all the difference; yet even as it was, there were always a few men and a few families who were prepared to risk everything, to attempt the impossible, to fight on for their freedom and pride.

Because the sections inevitably had to be abandoned from time to time, as the brave were forced to admit their temporary defeat, the A.F.A. eventually adopted the policy of preferring to sub-lease to grinkari land holders rather than allowing Ngarrindjeri farmers to work the blocks. For instance, in 1892, George Karpany wrote to the Association requesting that he be allowed to work Sec-

tion 1077 in the Hundred of Seymour (near East Wellington), but the finance sub-committee decided in favour of a grinkari farmer named Bundy.[64] The finance sub-committee also let Section 1079 in that Hundred to the same man at £5-5-0 per annum; and when this action was questioned at the general Committee meeting, it was explained that the Ngarrindjeri applications were refused because the land was unfit for cultivation and would revert to drift if not maintained as part of a larger property.[65] However for the sake of £10-10-0, it might well have been worth giving George Karpany a try on both blocks run in conjunction. Eventually George Karpany did acquire the sub-lease of 1077 Seymour in 1898;[66] and in 1901 Matthew Kropinyeri was finally to be given a chance to try farming on 1079 Seymour, after Bundy had leased it for nearly ten years.[67] In this year, the superintendent at Raukkan pointed out that 'about a dozen' Ngarrindjeri families were settled on blocks ranging from 40 to 140 acres in area. The attitude of the A.F.A. towards allocation of land to the Ngarrindjeri is clearly demonstrated in a letter written in 1902 from Francis Garnett to W.E. Dalton (the secretary of the Association):

> The lease lands in this neighbourhood are very inferior in quality and could only be useful to anyone in large blocks. Someone like ourselves, already possessing some good country could always make the best use of them. If the lands were handed over to the A.F.A., all Natives would participate in the benefits — if given to individual Natives, only individuals would benefit.[68]

The Committee fully supported this contention.

In 1906, the A.F.A. was still pursuing its policy of sub-leasing to grinkari pastoralists in preference to Ngarrindjeri farmers, and in that year, the Coorong and Needles reserves were let to

YEARS OF CLIMAX AND DECLINE (1899-1911).

Messrs Dodd and Bowman, despite protests from Henry Lampard, who wished to lease part of the land, and despite the fact that seven Ngarrindjeri men and their families had been occupying other parts.[69] Without a doubt, the contract (copied in full into the minutes) is a favourable one from the A.F.A. point of view, and equally obviously, T.R. Bowman wished to help the Association by his action. He was to fence in the sand-drifts, erect a windmill, and either to allow the A.F.A. to run 400 sheep on his property, or else pay £55-12-6 per annum[70] — all of which was generous and of benefit to the A.F.A., but whether the advantages could be weighed against the independence and livelihood of seven Ngarrindjeri 'battlers', is debateable.

It was in that year, 1906, that one of the major turning points in modern Ngarrindjeri history occurred. For some time previously, the Committee had been negotiating with Philip Charley, the owner of Narrung Station, to exchange some of the A.F.A. land for some of his. Finally, on 22 September 1905, the conditions for the exchange were approved. There were a number of conditions regarding fencing, right of Ngarrindjeri to camp etc., but basically, the A.F.A. gained about 650 acres of good land suitable for farming (which is what they wanted), while Charley acquired about 2,300 acres of mediocre land suitable for grazing (which is what the pastoralist wanted).[71] However, less than a year later, the A.F.A. and the Ngarrindjeri were shocked to learn that the whole station had been sold — to the Government.[72]

The exchange finalized in 1905 had already proved to be of substantial benefit to the Mission, and it was hoped that even greater advantages would accrue from the Government's purchase of

the entire Narrung estate. Francis Garnett, who was just about to relinquish his post as superintendent, discussed the desperate need for land in his final report. He went on to say: 'As the Government have bought the adjoining station, they now have a splendid opportunity for supplying this great need.'[73] It was a golden opportunity for the Government to provide worthwhile compensation for the seventy years of suffering which the Ngarrindjeri had undergone since the grinkaris usurped their country. The difference that the granting of this splendid tract of land would have made to the Ngarrindjeri in subsequent years, could scarcely be exaggerated. But it is pointless to speculate on such matters, for the Government flatly refused to grant one acre to its original owners: Narrung Station was divided into farms for Europeans only. Premier Tom Price made it clear that he believed the Ngarrindjeri to have no land rights at all, and that their position could not even be considered if it conflicted with the desires of Europeans. According to an Advertiser report, he told a deputation from the A.F.A. on 16 April 1907:

> The cutting up of the Narrung estate had certainly brought about new conditions with regard to the natives but the difficulty would have to be met. [The Government] could not give the Association any of the Narrung land, because it was too expensive and many settlers wanted it.[74]

One of the extraordinary aspects of this affair is that it would have paid the Government, from an entirely selfish point of view, to have given the whole station to the Ngarrindjeri, in order to make the community at Raukkan self-sufficient — which it would have done. The Government, in one action, could thus have freed itself from the perpetual and growing financial burden of supporting

the people who were unable to find employment to support themselves. In the event, the Government's callous indifference was to exacerbate the problem, and certainly from a Ngarrindjeri point of view, the result was not simply that they received no benefit: the effects were decidedly negative. There were some people, at the time, who could see the position quite clearly, and who attempted to draw the attention of the Government to its myopic mistakes. William Charlick, an old friend of the Ngarrindjeri, was such a man. In June 1909, he wrote a strongly worded letter to the Register which said, inter alia:

> ...the time has come for something more than charity. The natives want land — enough and to spare for future growth. .... From these people or their progenitors the British have appropriated without compensation, their lands. We hear a lot about British justice and British justice in their case is mostly froth and bubble, and about the meanest thing on earth; and if it were not for the kind work of the A.F.A. it would be deplorable. Placed on a very limited quantity of sandy land, no adequate opportunity for work and successful progress is offered to the manhood at Point McLeay. If sufficient land were set aside for the settlement and stocked with sheep, cattle and horses, it would give suitable occupation, and the profit arising therefrom would make it self-supporting. And these people are entitled to this, not as charity but as a right![75]

Fifty years later this same logical argument had still not permeated the racist hides of the various Australian governments.

One short-term deleterious effect produced by the disposal of Narrung was that the major source of Raukkan's firewood was cut off. In a community which depended entirely on wood for cooking and warmth, this was a serious blow indeed. Eventually, the lack of firewood forced the closure of the bakery at Raukkan, which in turn put more people out of work and added substantially to the cost of food. Various other disadvantages accrued from the loss of

YEARS OF CLIMAX AND DECLINE (1899-1911).

Narrung, which, under the management of G.G. Hacket, had always co-operated with Raukkan in such ways as the lending of stud rams and bulls, in providing shearing facilities (without cost) after Raukkan's shed was wrecked in a storm, and by helping in a variety of other ways. All this neighbourly assistance (which operated almost entirely in Raukkan's favour) was now to be lost. But the worst result was that the Ngarrindjeri were now to be surrounded by farmers; to be forced in much more upon Raukkan, and consequently to lose much of their remaining freedom. Narrung, as pastoral property, had not only provided Raukkan's firewood; its acres of uncleared scrub and park-like country had also provided game and birds to supplement the dreary rations; and it preserved the age-old camp sites for those who wished occasionally to quit the Mission and nourish their spirits in the country of their forebears. The settlers were to clear all this remaining natural scrub and forest, and to provide even more competition for what little game and fish remained. And the friendly neighbouring station was to be replaced by a grinkari township which was never friendly, always cold, and frequently hostile. In many ways, the loss of Narrung was the beginning of the great slide downwards for the Ngarrindjeri.

The blow was mitigated to a certain extent when John Verran led the State's first purely Labour government to power in 1910, and set aside for the A.F.A. a thousand acre scrub block called Wirrilda,[76] about five miles from the Mission. At least this helped temporarily to satisfy the urgent need for firewood. But Verran's hands were tied by the voting power of the majority race, which is an inherent part of the democratic system. His attempts to provide a little more

land for the A.F.A. were terminated suddenly by the receipt of a petition from the newly settled Narrung farmers, who had the effrontery to object to the Ngarrindjeri being allotted a tiny section of their own country. Concurrently, Matthew Kropinyeri wrote a letter to Sir Lancelot Stirling, president of the Legislative Council, urging him to support the move to grant more land. The letter provides a striking contrast both with the petition and with Verran's own note to the Protector, but it apparently achieved nothing else. (see Appendix V.) In March 1910,one George Bodey visited Raukkan and summarized the position nicely:

> I have much pleasure in again visiting this station and regret that nothing has been done in the way of providing more land for the Natives here, many of whom are anxious to go on the land and undoubtedly would make a success if provided with an opportunity of using their brains and marked ability.[77]

Teenminnie

Another loss occurring at about this time, which the Ngarrindjeri must have felt deeply, was the sinking of the Teenminnie. She had gone down once in 1892, but had been refloated and repaired, and had continued to perform all that was asked of her for a further seventeen years. But by 1909 she had given twenty three hard years of service, and when she was struck at her unsheltered moorings by a storm so violent that it even demolished the jetty, she went down for the last time and was written off as a total wreck.[78] Teenminnie was never replaced, for by 1909 the paddle steamers had recovered from the initial set-backs caused by the opening of the Adelaide-Melbourne railway, and there was now an efficient thrice-weekly service to Point Malcolm; while stores were being forwarded

direct to the Mission jetty from Milang.[79] But Teenminnie had done much more than fetch stores, carry away produce and deliver the mail. When she went, she must have left behind hundreds of memories of courageous voyages across the Lake against howling gales and vicious waves: halcyon holiday trips down the Coorong or into Lake Albert — her decks covered with swags and billies, guns and nets, and men, women and children laughing and singing in the sun, or in the shade of Teenminnie's gently billowing mainsail: of people-packed passages across to Milang or Goolwa to play and barrack at cricket or football; and the exhilarating return voyage after an exciting match, flying before the wind, the spray from the bows hissing past the happy faces as they relived and retold the incidents of a great victory: of fishing trips and battles with net, spear and line against mullowe and giant Murray cod: of those expeditions with Ambrose Redman far up the Murray to the Callitris forest country, and then, after a fortnight's energetic log-chopping, the peaceful return journey to Raukkan, laden down with five or six hundred fence posts, roof-rafters, beams and joists. And then of course there were the famous lakes regattas, when boats came from all over the Lower Murray to compete with each other for prizes and renown — and Teenminnie with every inch of sail crowded on, heeling so far over that the water boiled across her leeward gun'l, and somehow knowing that she had to win for her people's sake — it was, after all, their lake! That was Teenminnie, and when she went to join Mulgewanke, the legendary monster of the Lake, she took with her some of the spirit of the Ngarrindjeri, as she closed one of the final chapters on the nation's history.

YEARS OF CLIMAX AND DECLINE (1899-1911).

Industry and Employment

Industrially, the period began with optimism engendered by the success of the recently established woolwashing industry; and by the encouraging prospects of the irrigation scheme. However, in 1890, in his first report as farm overseer, Ambrose Redman enunciated Raukkan's most serious dilemma at the time — that of unemployment and under employment. Regrettably, unemployment was to remain the chief problem, and the cause of many other related problems, right through to the present time, but in 1890, Redman, while being fully aware of the gravity of the situation, was yet hopeful that a solution would be found. Reporting to the A.F.A. he said:

> An industry of a remunerative character seems to me to be a great want on the Station at the present time. Work is often done which is not remunerative, but undertaken to keep the natives employed. ..... The education they receive from the school fits them for a higher and more intellectual employment than that in which many of them are at present engaged.[80]

Here Redman is adverting to a consideration often and easily overlooked, particularly with regard to Aborigines: it is not just a matter of finding people jobs — the quality and usefulness of the employment is also of major significance. Undertaking work which is uninteresting, unchallenging and ultimately purposeless, except that it keeps a man physically occupied, may not be as bad as being without a job at all; but it is so humiliating and soul-destroying to a man of talent, skill, and intelligence, that it comes a very close second. Since the earliest days of the colony, the aim of even the more enlightened Europeans (like Angas) was to 'raise' the Aborigines to the lowest level of the European class structure. And this was still being advocated by the Liberal government of the 1960's.[81]

But Redman knew better, and he was appalled by the chronic waste of talent and the psychological damage done, when men of sensitivity and superior intelligence were compelled to undertake tasks that were not just menial — they were meaningless. It must have hurt him too, for it was his responsibility to find the jobs.

Until 1902, when the saltiness of the Lake destroyed the industry, woolwashing was the most remunerative and most reliable source of employment for the Ngarrindjeri. In 1892 Narrung and Warringie Stations sent their wool to Raukkan for the first time and, as a result, sixteen men were employed full-time for six weeks, washing a record quantity of wool. But the industry was to advance even further, and by 1894 twenty men were being employed annually for a period of three months (October, November and December).[82] Woolwashing had two other advantages, beside increasing employment opportunities: it was work that the men enjoyed; and it brought into the A.F.A. about £200 per annum.[83] But the salting of the lake in 1901 spelt the end of Raukkan's woolwashing industry, for by the time a barrage had been built across the Murray Mouth to keep the water fresh, the advent of motor transport meant that wool no longer needed to be lightened by washing it near the shearing sheds — it was taken in its greasy condition direct to the wool stores.

Perhaps the most interesting employment initiative taken during this period was instigated by the old squatter friend of the Ngarrindjeri — T.R. Bowman. In 1890 he offered to present two sewing machines to the A.F.A. in order to establish a boot and shoe industry at Raukkan.[84] A sub-committee was immediately set up to investigate the proposal, and also to report on Ambrose Redman's sug-

gestion that the acres of state-owned mallee scrub near Raukkan could provide the basis of a Eucalyptus industry for the Ngarrindjeri.[85] The sub-committee decided against the establishment of a Eucalyptus industry, and they also negatived the proposal to establish a boot factory: but they did recommend that facilities be set up at Raukkan to enable young men to be trained as bootmakers.[86] The reasons for their recommendations were not spelt out in the minutes, beyond making the assertion that the establishment of an industry would not be 'expedient'. It could have been simply that the sub-committee feared that the finance necessary for setting up a truly viable bootmaking factory would have been beyond the Association's reserves: in which case events were to prove them correct. On the other hand, the sub-committee may have decided that the role of the station from now on should be the training of the Ngarrindjeri so that they would be enabled to leave its confines, and 'take their place in white society'. If the sub-committee were motivated by this reasoning, events were to prove them wrong.

Because no factory was being set up, the sewing machines offered by Bowman were not needed or accepted: but the training scheme was to be commenced, and accordingly the A.F.A. budgeted for £150 to be spent on its establishment.[87] The barn was converted to a bootmaker's workshop,[88] and a Mr H.B. Baker was appointed Bootmaking Instructor at 30 shillings a week for twelve months.[89]

Baker began work in August 1891, and in the following month the Committee were able to inspect the first pair of boots made at Raukkan.[90] So keen and capable were his five apprentices that by the end of the following year, a surprised Teacher of Bootmaking was

able to write:

> They have made 287 pairs of boots and shoes, besides sundry repairs.... I can now place the work in the market and recommend it as equal to any other work in the same class.[91]

The scheme had the whole-hearted support of the Ngarrindjeri, and Gregory, the head teacher, reported that parents were very keen that their children should learn such a trade on leaving school.[92] The speed with which the young men mastered the trade, and the aptitude they evinced, astounded those who witnessed it, and by 1893 Baker was able to state with justifiable pride:

> We have made 459 pairs of boots within the twelve months including loss of time due to shearing and hay-making, at which myself and the boys assist. Boots have been sold to the "Queen" Murray trading steamer and storekeepers at Meningie and Goolwa, and have given thorough satisfaction. We also supply the Mission store and most of the settlers in the locality, who state that for wear and durability the boots we make are superior to those made by machines.[93]

Already four of the young men had reached a sufficiently high standard in the trade to enable them to leave and take their place in a bootmaker's workshop or factory, if positions could be found for them.

In August 1893, after spending two years at Raukkan, Baker resigned,and his place was taken by another craftsman, William Mugg.[94] By this time, the bootshop had become a permanent feature at Raukkan,and its results were in all ways,except one,most gratifying: that exception was that despite the high quality of the product and the number produced, the industry was still not covering costs when the wages of the instructor and the men were deducted from the sales. In 1894, there were five men making and three learning, and Mugg reported to the A.F.A. that three of the makers were

excellent tradesmen who were anxious to leave and get work outside the Mission.[95] But herein lay the weakness of the whole 'training' scheme: there were simply no boot or shoe manufacturers who were prepared to run the risk of offending their 'white' employees by employing 'black' labour. The young men from Raukkan might have been the most accomplished journeyman boot-makers in the province, but their skin pigmentation precluded any likelihood of their gaining acceptance alongside grinkari tradesmen in the city.

There were then only two alternatives: either the bootshop should close down — despite its notable achievements; or else it should expand, become mechanised, and compete on a more equal footing with the big city factories. Mugg was certain that the quality of the Ngarrindjeri craftsmen would ensure success if some machinery were installed, and he pleaded with the Committee to adopt this course of action.[96] The Association did not have the necessary finance to enable it to comply with the Bootmaking Instructor's wishes, but T.R. Bowman, who was obviously impressed by the success of the project he had initiated, did have enough money to enable him to donate a leather roller in 1897, and a sewing machine in 1898.[97] In this year piece-work was introduced for all those capable of maintaining themselves, which was seven out of the nine men then employed in the bootshop.[98]

The combination of the high reputation which the Raukkan product had acquired by this time, plus the new machinery, plus the piece-work system, did bring receipts much closer to disbursements. But when the factory was still running at a loss by 1899, the executive, at a special meeting with the superintendent, decided to rec-

ommend the closure of the bootshop at the end of that year.[99] However the industry was to be given a reprieve, for a special deputation sent to investigate the situation, recommended having one more try under a new instructor.[100] Accordingly, Mugg was sacked (after six years of service), and in June 1900, W.B. Mansell was appointed in his stead.[101] Mansell was also of the opinion that the industry could pay, but was unable to achieve any more satisfactory result than previously, and consequently the operation was officially closed in 1900. It was a decision made most reluctantly by the Committee, but as T.W. Fleming, the president of the Association, observed:

> The boots made by the natives have been of excellent quality and workmanship, but it seems almost hopeless to attempt to produce a saleable article at as low a cost as the Adelaide factories....[102]

However, Fleming was also able to report that two out of all the highly capable young men who had served their apprenticeship, had actually been able to find positions in an Adelaide factory, and were 'giving satisfaction.'[103]

As events transpired, the boot factory did not close at that time, for despite the fact that the instructor was withdrawn, the Ngarrindjeri bootmakers stayed at their benches, and continued to make and repair boots and harness for at least another six years. The training scheme was abandoned, and without the cost burden of the apprentices' wages, the Ngarrindjeri journeymen were able, on a reduced scale of operations, to supply new boots for the entire station, all the neighbours, and a few store-keepers as well. And make it pay.[104] But without young men coming on, and without the offi-

cial sanction of the A.F.A., the actual manufacture of boots and shoes declined; and by 1914, even repairs were not being done in the old bootshop that had once seemed to offer such excellent prospects to the Ngarrindjeri youth.[105]

The Ngarrindjeri had, since time immemorial, been master craftsmen in wood, and it is not surprising that they took to the type of carpentering introduced by the grinkaris very readily. They had also been building boats for untold centuries, and it seems only natural that eventually an attempt should have been made to start building boats in the European style at Raukkan. The opportunity came late in 1893, when an Adelaide man sent some books on boat-building to the Raukkan library.[106] They were eagerly read by some enterprising Ngarrindjeri men, who began operations in the following year. They were just completing their first vessel in August 1894, when a group of parliamentarians, led by Dr Cockburn (the Minister of Educatior & Agriculture), and complete with a retinue of reporters, descended upon the Mission on a visit of inspection. The Observer's correspondent was impressed by almost everything he saw at Raukkan, and as part of a full and lengthy report, he wrote:

> If the bootmaking was satisfactory, the boat-building was more so. Down in a big woolshed on the lake shore, we found Edward Kropinyerie and Bertie Tripp (half-castes) and Albert Karloan (full-blooded native) engaged upon a pram 15 feet long, clinker built, well and securely ribbed and fastened with copper rivets, carefully in somewhat too strongly constructed from stem to stern. It was the first they had built and it did them infinite credit![107]

The Chief Protector of Aborigines must also have been impressed, for the Ngarrindjeri won a contract to build seven boats for the Government in 1895.[108]

YEARS OF CLIMAX AND DECLINE (1899-1911).

It will be recalled that one of the few positive results of the 1860 enquiry was that the Government decided to give the River and Lakes Aborigines a few canoes each year (see Chapter III). The decision was made on the best of economic motives and was completely unvitiated by sentimentality. It had emerged from Mason's evidence that the Lower Murray Aborigines depended very heavily for their livelihood on fishing from their canoes, but that settlers had destroyed many of the River Red Gums from which the canoes were made; and would not allow Aborigines to cut canoes from those trees still standing. The Government quite rightly decided that it was better economics to give out a few boats each year, and thus enable the Aborigines to fend for themselves, than to pay a sub-protector to give out the quantity of subsistence rations that would otherwise be needed. (It is a great pity that this hard-headed economic philosophy was not more generally applied. Had, for instance, the tiny sum been spent in the 1870's that would have enabled the Ngarrinjeri to become independent and self-sufficient farmers, it would have saved countless thousands of dollars which, in the 1970's, the present Government has to spend each year on their socially, mentally and physically sick descendants.)

In conformity with the recommendations of the 1860 Report, the Government had continued to distribute a few boats amongst the surviving River Murray people from time to time, and until 1895, the contract to make these boats had always gone to grinkari boat-builders. However, in that year, the newly established industry at Raukkan won the contract to supply seven dinghies to the Government — a contract that was to be repeated in 1898. It appears, however,

that this was the last time that boats were distributed to Aborigines by the Government, and the limited market in the Lakes and River towns was already catered for by their own local boat-builders. Thus, despite the excellence of its product, the industry never really burgeoned before lack of custom had caused it to wither by the end of this period.

Throughout the two decades, shearing, the most constant Ngarrindjeri occupation since the invasion, continued to supply a regular source of employment every spring. Until 1895, the sheds worked by the Ngarrindjeri were almost always in or near their own country; but in that year the shearing industry was given a considerable boost by J.H. Angas, who invited the Ngarrindjeri to send forty shearers and some boys to his station at Hill River, near Clare.[109] The superintendent (Sutton) accompanied the men and boys, and the innovation proved emminently successful. In 1896, Sutton's report to the A.F.A. included the following paragraph:

> Last shearing time, I took 40 men and 6 boys to Hill River and shore Mr J.H. Angas's sheep. They did the work well and gave satisfaction to Mr Angas and his officers, so much that they are wanted again this year. Their good conduct and absence of coarse language generally heard in shearing sheds, astonished and pleased everyone on the place. The overseer expressed a hope that we would come back again.[110]

Hill River continued to provide employment for Ngarrindjeri shearers until 1904, when J.H. Angas died; and in the course of the next few years the station was cut up for farms.[111] While it lasted, the contract at Hill River did not really increase employment, but it did regularize it over the short period of each year when the Ngarrindjeri were most likely to be most fully employed in any case. It saved the men from tramping from shed to shed, and it meant that

they could be together in one large group for about two months. The real need, however, was for employment during the other ten months of the year.

In 1897, Ambrose Redman included a description of the employment at Raukkan on a typical day outside the 'busy' months (September to December) as part of his annual report:

> The day of writing this report the men were employed in various ways, and gives a fair idea as to how men are engaged from time to time: — in the boot factory, 7; woodcarting, 4; fencing, 1; trimming hedge, 2; stableman, 1; milkman, 1; butcher and baker, 1; cook, 1; gardeners, 2; boundary rider, 1; rabbiter, 1.[112]

The number employed on this day adds up to twenty six, yet 1897 was one of the years in which forty shearers and several boys were employed at Hill River during the spring. Clearly then, only about half the available work-force was gainfully occupied on this day, which Redman says was typical except for the last months of the year.

A valuable economic contribution was made by the Ngarrindjeri concert parties which visited Adelaide and other centres at the turn of the century. There were both adult and children's choirs in operation, and in one year (1900) they raised in excess of £209,[113] while in 1902, returns from their performances at Adelaide, Port Adelaide, and Glenelg exceeded £40.[114] This money in turn afforded further employment at Raukkan, as it enabled repairs, additions, and other construction works to be carried out at the village. In fact in 1901, the farm overseer (Williams) was able to report that because of the additional finance, there was 'steady and almost constant work on the Mission.'[115] This happy position, however, was short lived. By 1903, the financial situation was deteriorating rapidly, and so, in

consequence, were the opportunities for employment.

In this year (1903) Philip Rigney won a contract to erect a vermin-proof fence around The Needles. The Committee were well pleased with the excellence of his work, and he employed only Ngarrindjeri labour on the job. But despite the extra job opportunities thus created, unemployment again soared to the chronic level.[116] In 1904, Redman reported that:

> The work available is not sufficient to occupy many of the able-bodied men, and they are consequently more difficult to manage than would be the case if they were fully occupied.[117]

The situation was partially caused by, and then exacerbated by, a drought which had at this time hit the State as a whole, and had reduced the finance available for job creation and maintenance. This, in turn, had forced more of the Ngarrindjeri back onto the station, thus worsening the unemployment there and increasing the need for rations, which in any case had been reduced by a Government that was also feeling the result of the lean years. In 1893 a Ngarrindjeri fisherman was employed and a fish smoke house erected for the purpose of supplying fish to the inhabitants of Raukkan, owing to the fact that the station was no longer capable of providing enough mutton for people to eat.[118] But by 1905, the fishing industry, which Taplin had hoped would provide a permanent source of income for the Ngarrindjeri, was practically non-existent. As T.W. Fleming (the A.F.A. president) observed:

> [the] natural supplies of fish and game have been so much interfered with by the salt water in the Lakes, by white fishermen with their miles of nets, and up-to-date appliances, and by the large number of sportsmen who regularly visit the lakes during the sporting season.[119]

What was 'sport' to some men was life and death to others, and it is

no coincidence that the mortality rate at this time should begin to climb to such an appalling level, as previously described. Gone were the days when the unemployed Ngarrindjeri could take to the bush with their families, or live off the fish and birds and fruit that once flourished in the lakes or on their shores. For, by this time, the grinkaris had destroyed much of the bush, and much of what had thriven in the lakes.

So desperate was the situation by 1905, that fourteen part-Europeans were expelled from Raukkan in that year: not because of any alleged misdemeanor, but because the station could no longer support all of its people, and they were the ones most likely to be able to obtain outside employment![120] In the event, only a few of them were able to get jobs, and the A.F.A. reluctantly allowed the remainder to return.[121] Fortunately, Ambrose Redman was able to obtain a roadmaking contract for the Ngarrindjeri with the Meningie Council in that year, so the situation was, to some extent, relieved. But he still had to report that:

> The number of unemployed far exceeds the employed during the winter months, and the question of remunerative work is a very serious one during this period.[122]

Apart from the young and the old who were dying of malnutrition, the worst hit by unemployment were the young men and women who were being permanently injured (as youth the world over always is) by protracted periods of enforced idleness. In his annual report, T.W. Fleming wrote:

> Following his recent visit, Mr Justice Homburg [Minister for Education] characterized the children as "extremely intelligent and their conduct exemplary". With insufficient employment, however, this condition cannot last. Young men of fair education, decent habits and honest intentions, drift into

> loafers playing marbles and other childish games when they should be at work. The children, boys and girls, go to day school and Sabbath school and are taught the difference between right and wrong, and the dignity of labour, just as the average white child is taught, but when they leave school there is no work to give them and no opportunity to practise what they have learnt, and consequently the drift commences immediately on their leaving school.[123]

The Committee were convinced that if the Government gave the Association greater powers over the Ngarrindjeri youth, they would be able to deal with their employment problem more effectively. Accordingly, they sought to have conferred on them the same powers which the State Children's Department possessed, to board out youths and girls on farms and in households as servants. This was the system which operated at the time in Queensland. Such a scheme was open to many abuses, as the Queensland experience later revealed, especially since the wages earned by the servants were not paid directly to them. However, in the first decade of the twentieth century, the policy seemed to offer some hope to a Committee that could find no other answer: but the Government did not agree, for the proposal was never sanctioned by law. The Register lent its support to the A.F.A., and on 8 December 1905, the editorialist stated:

> It is a matter for regret that practical steps have not been taken during the present session of Parliament to give the committee charged with the management of the Point McLeay Native Mission, statutory authority to deal more effectively with the young Aboriginals and half-castes for whom constant work of a profitable kind cannot be found on the station. During the many years that the mission has been in existence, it has rendered valuable service to the State, and incidentally it has relieved the Government of considerable expense by assisting natives to earn an honest living, and providing them with permanent homes. Hitherto the work has been carried on without invoking the aid of the law, but problems have arisen which cannot be solved by moral persuasion. Owing to the limited area of land available at Pt. McLeay — most of which is unsuitable for cultivation — it is impossible for the manager to find employment on the station for more than a limited num-

> ber of natives. The result is that lads and young women have to be maintained in semi-idleness, because the committee has no power to make more satisfactory arrangements.[124]

It is debatable, however, if a system which was forced to allow for semi-idleness, was really worse than one which would have promoted a condition of semi-slavery.

In 1906 the downward trend in job opportunities continued, and the situation was succinctly described as follows by a Mr. H. Jacob, who visited the station in May of that year:

> I have been much impressed with the advantages this institution offers for the education of the young and for the care of the old. I could wish it afforded better opportunities for the healthy occupation of numerous able-bodied men who stand idle all day long.[125]

White racism had always affected the job opportunitites available to the Ngarrindjeri, and as this racism increased throughout the nineteenth century and early in the twentieth century, discrimination in employment also increased. It was reported at the Annual General Meeting of the A.F.A. in 1907, that Ngarrindjeri workers were even prevented from working on the railways because grinkari labourers refused to work with them.[126] However, in this year, the desperate situation began to ease somewhat, due, paradoxically, to the cutting up of Narrung Station. The new settlers needed assistance in clearing their blocks, and were able to draw on the ready source of labour close at hand. The settlers also needed the skills of stonemasons like Matthew Kropinyeri and William MacHughes as well as carpenters, fencers, and other skilled bush workers. The opportunities to work were not, of course, on a long-term basis, but they were eagerly accepted while they lasted.

1907 was also the year in which Ambrose Redman was promoted

to superintendent to replace Francis Garnett. Although he had been vigorously pursuing every opportunity for employment that arose while he was overseer, his new position enabled him to exert more pressure and take further initiatives. So successful was he, that in June 1908, when normally employment would have been at its lowest ebb, almost everyone at Raukkan was able to get a job. Charles Eaton Taplin visited the station in that month, and recorded the following remarks:

> The natives are in a happy and contented condition, those who are able and willing are provided with work, owing to the enterprise and forethought of the superintendent in taking contracts for grubbing and roadmaking to give the native men employment.[127]

In that year (1908) fifty Ngarrindjeri men were employed during the winter months — an all time record;[128] while in the summer, Redman provided increased opportunities by arranging for some of the men to go to Renmark to work in the newly established fruit industry.[129]

The manufacture of traditional Ngarrindjeri artefacts, far from falling off with the continuing Europeanization of the people, gained impetus from the better market facilities afforded by improved communication and transport between Raukkan and Adelaide and other centres. The Ngarrindjeri were enabled to sell artefacts on such occasions as the Chamber of Manufacturer's Exhibition in Adelaide, on the one hand,[130] while on the other, an increasing tourist trade to Raukkan brought people who were keen to purchase souvenirs of their journey across the Lake to the Mission.

The success of the Ngarrindjeri basketry and matting on the market must have attracted the interest of the Royal Institution for the Blind, since in 1909 they investigated the aquatic marshes used

by the Ngarrindjeri, and found them to be superior to those which they imported for rattan work. The Institution generously attempted to help the Ngarrindjeri to establish their own rattan industry, but it failed to take root. Fleming, in his presidential report for 1909, explained the reason:

> One of the Natives, Fred Kelly, spent some weeks at the Blind School learning to plait, and on his return was able to instruct other Natives at the Mission. The price offered is, however, not sufficient to induce the Natives to give up their own mat and basket work at which they are experts, and which they find much more remunerative.[131]

In his penultimate Annual Report, Redman was able to point to the fact that ninety four Ngarrindjeri had found work in the sheds as shearers or in other capacities,[132] but in the following year, P.W. Francis, in his teacher's report, reiterated his annual complaint:

> It is nothing short of calamity that there is no definite employment for the boys and girls when they leave my hands. At present, most of them drift into idle ways, and after a time, disinclination for work of any kind rules them with an iron hand.[133]

Perhaps the saddest comment of all appears in that same Annual Report (for the year 1911-12). It was to be Redman's last report to the A.F.A., and he observed that employment prospects could well be improving, but for the very worst reason:

> The number attending school is less than for many years. There are now only 35 compared with 80 eight years ago. It would seem that we have passed through the years when employment had to be found for large numbers of the children, and there should not be a great difficulty in the future in finding employment for the few as they leave school.[134]

The ultimate answer to Raukkan's chronic unemployment problem was thus not found in job opportunities created by the A.F.A., nor in farm land allocated by the Government: it was found in the terrible

mortality rate in the overcrowded little settlement, which took away a large proportion of children and youths who would otherwise have needed jobs, and who would have created further unemployment by having more children. Even those who survived, could scarcely have come through the prolonged periods of unemployment unscathed. At the height of the Great Depression, the percentage of unemployed Australians rose to a peak of 29% in 1932,[135] and this experience has left a lasting impression on the Australian psyche. How much more deeply must the knife of unemployment have struck into the soul of the Ngarrindjeri, amongst whom unemployment consistently exceeded 50%,year after year.

Finance

Financially, the period was characterized by a steady increase in the A.F.A.'s difficulties, rising to the point when the Association was simply unable to continue without further substantial Government assistance. A number of factors were involved in the worsening situation, several of which have already been touched upon. The rising population was an obvious factor influencing the cost of running the station. The high mortality rate was more than compensated for by the increasing number of Ngarrindjeri people being forced into the station by the rapidly advancing grinkari occupation and destruction of their country. Most of those forced to accept Raukkan's somewhat unwilling hospitality at this time were the people who had fought most resolutely to retain the old way of life, and who had shunned Europeans as much as possible. When their precarious livelihood was taken from them they had either to fall

back on the Mission, or perish; and their dogged adherence to the old traditions, in many ways, unfitted them to earn a living in the manner in which those who had previously settled at Raukkan were desperately trying to do. Thus they became a disproportionately heavy drain on the dwindling resources available. The same could not be said of those newcomers sent to Raukkan from Poonindie, when the Government viciously and cynically forced the disbandment of that flourishing community in 1893. These people were highly skilled farmers, but there was already a plethora of would-be Ngarrindjeri farmers without farms, so the Poonindie families, after thirty three years of financial independence, were also to be forced to accept the A.F.A.'s limited charity.

Combined with the increased demands on the Association's resources, was a decreasing income. Figures show a steady decline in subscriptions throughout the period, falling from £456 in 1888-9 to £121 in 1912-13. Occasionally, a small legacy gave a boost to the particular year in which it was bequeathed (for instance, in 1911, a legacy of £300 was received), but overall, the decline is quite marked.[136] The fall was caused, in part, by the feeling that the public should not have to support part-Europeans who were quite able to look after themselves. Thus the people lost out in both ways: they were precluded from obtaining jobs because of their Aboriginal ancestry, and precluded from gaining assistance because of their European ancestry. The bitter irony would not have been lost on the Ngarrindjeri.

The Committee, too, was not entirely blameless in causing some disaffection among the subscribing public. In 1889, the 'hono-

rarium' of the secretary was raised from £20 to £50.[137] Admittedly, the secretary's position was, by this time, quite time consuming, but when it is recalled that the matron, whose job entailed all kinds of onerous tasks, and who was on call at Raukkan 24 hours a day, received only £25 per annum: and when it is compared with the £23-8-0 paid to the full-time Ngarrindjeri evangelists and teachers battling on their own in the bush, and carrying out the real purpose of the A.F.A., then the £50 given to the honorary secretary each year, does seem a little generous. The issue was to remain a contentious one even into the 1950's (by which time the honorarium had increased to £200) and a few members of the Association were troubled by the inaccuracy of the term 'honorary', and questioned the propriety of spending on administration, so much money that the public had really given for the Aborigines.

Another factor which would have adversely influenced some subscribers was the Oldham affair. C.A. Oldham became the treasurer in 1888, replacing his father, Nathaniel Oldham, who died in that year, after thirty years of loyal and reliable service to the A.F.A.. Unfortunately for the Association, the son did not prove as reliable as the father, and in October 1892, the secretary, Dalton, had to report that Oldham was not paying the Government cheque into the Association's account, and that £240 was missing.[138] Oldham could not be contacted, and was accordingly written to, but in November he had still not paid the outstanding amount into the account.[140] Apparently, Oldham eventually did find the A.F.A.'s money, for when he resigned a year later, he was thanked for his services and was invited to remain on the Committee as an ordinary member.[140] He was

unable to do this, however, as he was shortly taken to spend some time at the Stockade (now Yatala Labour Prison) for the crime of embezzlement.[141] Although the A.F.A. appears not to have suffered financially from C.A. Oldham's dishonesty, James Ngunaitponi certainly did. Oldham's father had invested the £100 which Mrs Smith of Dunesk had given James in 1871, in order that he might have a steady income from the interest. This £100 was amongst the money misappropriated by the younger Oldham. James naturally complained of his loss to the A.F.A., whom, he felt, were responsible for it. In fact they were not responsible in the strictly legal sense, but to their credit, the Committee did agree to pay James 10/- per month to compensate him for his loss.[142]

It seems that Jemima Russell was much too sanguine in thinking that Satan might have finally released his hold on Mrs Smith's money: he had been at work in other ways too. Just before Frederick Taplin died, the A.F.A. secretary wrote to Barlow, the Smith of Dunesk attorney, asking for an increase in the annual grant of £100. The request was refused, and instead, in 1891, the Committee were advised that the Fund's support of the Mission was actually going to be completely withdrawn.[143] The Committee were naturally appalled, and put up a spirited fight to retain what was rightfully theirs. They wrote to the Colonial Secretary of the Free Church of Scotland, laying the facts before him, and objecting strenuously to the proposed action of the South Australian Assembly,[144] but the appeal was unsuccessful, and produced only an affirmation of the impending cessation of the annual subscription.[145] The Committee counter-attacked by gathering as much relevant information as possible, including

copies of letters from Mrs Smith and her sister to George Taplin (then in the possession of Taplin's widow), and publishing the most significant excerpts in a pamphlet.[146] The Register came strongly to the support of the A.F.A. in this matter, and ridiculed the justification put forward by the Presbyterians for their actions. The only justification they had was that in the actual deed, Mrs Smith made no reference to Aborigines — it was only in a letter attached to the deed that she had asked that the money should be spent for the Aborigines. (Plus, of course, many other letters on the subject.) In reply to this specious argument, the Register editorialist said:

> ...it will say little for the fairness and generosity of the Presbyterian Church if, in the face on an admittedly expressed wish, the trustees do not move a peg beyond the lines of their piece of parchment. It seemed natural enough for Shylock to claim "'Tis not in the bond," but for the same plea to be urged by a Christian Church is incongruous, to say the least of it.[147]

The Presbyterians were not unaffected by the force of the criticism, and they did modify their plans slightly: the assistance to the Aborigines was to be phased out over three years, rather than ceasing immediately. Thus, in 1894, the A.F.A. received £60; in 1895, £40; and in 1896, £20.[148] This was the final payment, and with their appeals to the consciences of the men responsible for the misappropriation of Mrs Smith's Fund having failed, there was nothing further that the A.F.A. could do. The Fund officially passed to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in South Australia, and from that time it ceased to have any relevance to the Ngarrindjeri. But the final abuse was to occur in the 1930's, when the Fund was used by the Rev John Flynn to build hospitals in central and northern Austra-

lia, from which the people whom he contemptuously described as 'niggers' were specifically excluded![149]

With the loss of the annual £100 grant from the Smith of Dunesk Fund, and with falling public subscriptions, the Association was forced to rely more heavily than ever on the Government for support. However, despite deputations and letters to the Government pleading for increased assistance, it was not forthcoming until 1908, when it was both too late, and too little. Ten years earlier the Association had pointed out that it was practically crippled by lack of funds, and that it was therefore prevented from exploiting its own resources by increasing its flocks and areas under irrigation etc.[150]

In 1899, the A.F.A. found an unexpected ally in the person of the Governor, Lord Tennyson (son of the poet), who consented in that year to become the patron of the Association. He was an outspoken critic of the Government's Aboriginal policies; and when, in 1900, he addressed the Annual General Meeting, he must have caused quite a stir. E.L. Batchelor (Minister of Agriculture and Education) also addressed that meeting, and amongst other observations, he made the extraordinary claim that it would be damaging to the Aborigines if more were to be spent on them. The Governor, however, launched an attack which made this claim appear ridiculous and part of his speech was recorded as follows:

> I have some figures given by the Protector of Aborigines which I should like to read to you. He states that New South Wales assists the natives at the rate of £2-8-1 per head, Victoria at the rate of £11-3-10 per head, whilst South Australia, I am sorry to say, contributes only at the rate of £1-9-9 per head. This gives us food for reflection.[151]

YEARS OF CLIMAX AND DECLINE (1899-1911).

Needless to say, Lord Tennyson was very popular with the A.F.A., if not with the Government, and the following year (1901) Fleming's presidential address included the following reference to this fact:

> It is a matter of profound satisfaction to your Committee that the claims of the Aboriginal inhabitants have of late been receiving increased attention, due in no small degree to the hearty, practical interest in their welfare manifested by His Excellency Lord Tennyson, who, ever since his arrival in this State, has pleaded powerfully on their behalf.[152]

When Tennyson's term expired, the cause was taken up by the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Samuel Way, who also attacked the Government and South Australians generally for their parsimony. In 1902, Way pointed out that the income at Raukkan for that year was £3,569, of which the Government contributed £1,000, subscriptions £179, and the Ngarrindjeri themselves £2,390. He went on to say that:

> Such a result was remarkable, when they remembered that not one of the village settlements could show similar results, although £80,000 or £100,000 had been expended on them.[153]

After complimenting the Ngarrindjeri and the A.F.A. on their effort, Sir Samuel Way turned his attention to the public subscription and said:

> The paltry sum of £179 derived from that source included £20 from the London Missionary Society and £40 from the Citizens Welcome Committee in connection with the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York. It was a matter for profound regret that the public of South Australia had subscribed only a paltry dole of about £100 to such a worthy institution.[154]

Heartening as such prestigioussupport must have been for the A.F.A., the effect which it had on the Government seems to have been negligible. The following year (1903) was even bleaker, with no extra Government aid in sight, and in 1904, Fleming again had to report that the Government had refused to help the Committee to recover

from its financial difficulties.[155] In that year also, the Government was again attacked at the Annual General Meeting, this time by W.J. Sowden, who pointed out that:

> In the village settlements, the settlers had not to pay their school teachers; and there was something wrong when the committee of an organization, such as the Point McLeay Mission, had to pay for the teaching of the children. Why should 72 Aboriginal children not be taught by the Government, just as 72 white children would be?[156]

Under the terms of the original agreement reached in 1859, the Association had to find the cost of the superintendent's and the teacher's salary each year, from public subscription, in order to be eligible for the Government grant. And in 1902, for the first time ever, the wages (£215) exceeded the amount received from the public (£179-19-10). Despite the fact that the officers' salaries were reduced during the following two years, the public subscription diminished even further, so that in 1904, it had fallen to £149-7-8 compared with a salary bill of £191-18-4.[157] The argument regarding the school was such a clear one that the Government finally relented in 1905, and took over full financial responsibility for it, thus relieving the Association of an average annual expenditure of about £250.[158] Nevertheless, the Association's finances were in a desperate state, and another deputation was arranged to meet the Government with a view to obtaining relief. The deputation told the Government that it was 'undesirable' that it should carry on running the station under the present conditions.[159] This was the first indication that the situation had deteriorated to the extent that the A.F.A. was prepared to give up the Mission.

By 1907, the move to hand over Raukkan to the Government

seems to have become an accepted part of A.F.A. policy, and in April, a deputation waited on the premier to discuss the matter.[160] According to the Advertiser, a petition from eighteen of the older Ngarrindjeri had already reached the Government a few days prior to the A.F.A.'s deputation, the two communications being entirely independent of each other, but more or less with the same purpose.[161] Apparently the memorialists were members of the dwindling group of Ngarrindjeri of the full descent, and, amongst other things, they complained that only about £50 per year of the Government's £1,000 subsidy actually reached them — the rest went to the maintenance of grinkari staff and administration. They also said that they wanted 'more food and less prayer'![162]

The A.F.A. deputation told the premier that whilst the Association wished to continue the religious work at Raukkan, and to retain its control of the Church and minister's house, it wanted the Government to take over completely the secular or industrial side of the Mission administration. The A.F.A. members felt that with its much greater resources, the Government could run Raukkan more efficiently, and counter the unemployment problem by establishing industries.[163] In reply, Mr Price is reported to have told the deputation that:

> The Ministry had no desire to take over the mission if the association could continue it. He believed that a little more monetary assistance would readily be granted if the association would keep on with the work, but at the same time, the Government were advised that the present difficulties would occur again, and no increased vote could save the position. (Hear, hear). The gentlemen forming the deputation represented various religious denominations and all sections of the community. They had banded themselves together under the name of the Aborigines' Friends' Association, and having now failed successfully to carry out the secular portion of the mission

> work, it devolved upon the Government of the day to take it over.[164]

With the promise from the premier that the request of the deputation would be acceded to, and with his extraordinary declaration that the 'half-castes' at Raukkan should 'fall in line with civilization and settle industriously on the land', the meeting was brought to an apparently successful conclusion.[165] Three months later, a letter to the A.F.A. from the Commissioner of Public Works intimated that the Government was prepared to assume control of Raukkan, provided that there were no strings attached.[166] However, there were strings attached: the A.F.A. did not wish to make an unconditional gift of the station and all its stock, buildings etc. The Government could take back the land, but the Committee felt that it should receive compensation for the many improvements it had added in over fifty years of occupation.[167] Thus a temporary deadlock was reached, and the negotiations ceased.

Finally, in 1908, the Government increased its grant by 50% to £1,500, and this, combined with a good price for wool that season, enabled the Committee to complete a satisfactory year, and to gain new hope for the future. But the Government grant again fell to £1,000 in 1909 and 1910. In the latter year, John Verran, the new Labour premier, promised another rise of £500 in 1911, and this promise was duly honoured.[168] But this was simply not enough, and so at the end of the period, the A.F.A. was in worse financial difficulty than it had ever been, and was now firmly committed to the drastic step of handing over Raukkan to the Government as soon as possible.

YEARS OF CLIMAX AND DECLINE (1899-1911).

The Village

Raukkan had changed little during the decade after George Taplin's death; but from 1889, significant changes began to occur to the village and its environs. Irrigation made a palpable difference to the lives of the Ngarrindjeri who lived in the little township, both by improving the type and quantity of food available to them; and by allowing them to begin planting trees and gardens. The people took pride in their homes, and now, as it began to develop as such, they were able to take a real pride in their township, which must have compared more than favourably with most other villages of its size in South Australia. In 1903, Redman was able to report that the workmen had that year metalled all the roads in the town,[169] and the following year the superintendent, Garnett, reported:

> The Mission settlement grows steadily in picturesque beauty, having better roads, paths and cottage gardens, and healthy plantations of gum and pine trees on every side; all protected by boxthorn hedges.[170]

By the second decade of the twentieth century, when the trees had matured and the gardens were flourishing, Raukkan was indeed a beautiful and picturesque little town, as the photographs demonstrate. In 1910, Redman decided to reclaim the old limestone quarry which had been the main source of materials for so many of Raukkan's early buildings. It was in the centre of the town, so Redman decided to turn it into gardens, and in so doing, he commemorated the first half century of the town's existence by naming it the 'Jubilee Reserve'. Reporting to the Association that year, Fleming said:

> "Jubilee Reserve" has been divided into garden plots, and these being apportioned amongst the white and native residents, have been planted with flowers and shrubs, and are a pleasing substitute for the former limestone quarry.[171]

In later years, this was to become Raukkan's major beauty spot, a secluded park for lovers, and a source of justifiable pride for the residents.

When George Taplin, John Laelinyeri, James Ngunaitponi and others began building the little one-roomed cottages in the 1860's, the dwellings were quite up to the general bush standard for those times. But by 1890, South Australian housing had advanced considerably, and the aspirations and needs of the residents of Raukkan had likewise advanced.[172] Yet, despite the fact that there were some quite large families by this time, David Blackwell, the superintendent, wrote to the Committee advising them that larger cottages were not necessary.[173] The question was allowed to rest for the time being, as the Ngarrindjeri threw themselves energetically into the task of raising stone, burning lime, and raising money to build the additions to their chapel. But the size of the houses was an important issue with the people, and Blackwell's rejection of their request was a source of grievance; for one of the major recommendations of the sub-committee which went to Raukkan in 1892 in response to the Ngarrindjeri call for Blackwell's dismissal, was that the cottages should be enlarged to two rooms.

The old problem of lack of tenure remained, and the important incentive of home-ownership — which most South Australian home builders had — was missing. A Ngarrindjeri family might skimp and save and labour for years to build a beautiful home, but they could be thrown out the day it was finished, without any redress or compensation, if the A.F.A. or their agent decided to do so. There is no record of such an occurrence during this period, but it was al-

ways possible, and hence the insecurity was always there; and those like John Laelinyeri, who had built cottages and then left Raukkan, were unable to get any remuneration from the Association for the buildings they left behind.[174] Under these circumstances, it would not have been surprising if the Ngarrindjeri had not been keen to expend time and money on bigger houses; but the needs of their families dictated that they should. The Committee decided to help with the cottage enlargements by supplying, free of charge, the doors, windows, rafters and wall-plates to those families prepared to pay for or build the masonry, flooring and roofing.[175] Bearing in mind the relative value of the home-builders' own contribution, the Association did well from such an arrangement.

John Sumner's family was the first to occupy one of the new 'double' cottages, and by 1894 there were two others built, which, with the twenty eight 'single' cottages, amounted to thirty one cottages altogether in the village.[176] However, there was still chronic overcrowding, and many more cottages or additional rooms were needed. The following year (1895), two more 'double' cottages were completed, and the work of building and extending was continued as finance permitted until, by 1902, Garnett was able to report that 'all settled natives on the Mission are now occupying cottage homes.'[177] By this time, the Ngarrindjeri tradesmen were doing all the work involved in building construction — including making the window sashes.[178] And in addition to houses, they had built a new school, a new dormitory, enlarged the carpenter's shop, and undertaken various other building projects. The Ngarrindjeri had every right to be proud of Raukkan as it was in its hey-day, for the township had been

essentially built by themselves.

In 1899, the Poonindie Trust[179] had offered £40 to help build two three roomed cottages for two of the ex-Poonindie families (Chester and Varcoe) then living at Raukkan.[180] Apparently they had been used to a higher standard of living on the West Coast. These cottages were finally completed in 1901, and cost the record price of £47-17-8 each[181] — a sum that was beyond the financial resources of most Ngarrindjeri people at that time.

When the temporary relief from the perennial financial depression occurred in 1908, the opportunity was taken to reroof the cottages and other thatched roof buildings, with galvanized iron. The cost was computed to be £5 for a 'single' cottage and £10 for a 'double'.[182] By September of that year, twenty three cottages had been roofed and ceiled, and there were thirteen still requiring iron. (The total at this time was thirty six cottages.)[183] The new roofs may not have looked as picturesque as the old thatched roofs, but they gave more efficient protection from rain, and were also deemed to be healthier.

By 1911, the jetty at Raukkan was in such a state of disrepair that it was unuseable, and since the Government steadfastly refused to grant the financial assistance needed to build a new jetty, the station was forced to make use of the Point Malcolm jetty, about three miles away. But apart from having its jetty in ruins, the village was in beautiful condition when Ambrose Redman retired. Although other less tangible aspects seemed to indicate that the Ngarrindjeri had reached the edge of a terrible precipice, the little township they had built by the sweat of their brows, the skill

of their hands and the resolution of their communal spirit, revealed none of the tragedy that was to come. The visitor beheld an idyllic lakeside village, complete with boarding school, chapel, store, neat cottages, colourful gardens, stately trees, boats bobbing at anchor, and various workshops and farm buildings: and the whole aspect conveyed an impression of serenity, happiness, and confidence in a prosperous future.

Population

The racial and cultural Europeanization of the people continued apace during the two decades which straddled the turn of the century. As had been the case even in George Taplin's time, the part-European families tended to be able to withstand the onslaughts of introduced diseases and ailments more successfully than Ngarrindjeri families of the full descent, and consequently the proportion of part-Europeans was continually increasing. The A.F.A. officials continued to point out from time to time that the changing racial composition of the people on their station was not due to rampant prostitution and adultery, but was mainly attributable to the fact that part-European families were appreciably larger, and that though a young man or woman might be purely Aboriginal, yet his spouse would in all probability not be, and thus their children would also not be. Fleming, in his presidential report in 1909, took pains to stress this point, and after stating that there had been only one illegitimate birth on the station during the last five years, he went on to say:

> A certain amount of ignorance seems to prevail regarding the Half-castes and quadroons at the Point McLeay Mission Station.

YEARS OF CLIMAX AND DECLINE (1899-1911).

> A well known and equally well respected Clergyman of an Anglican Church near Adelaide, speaking of the Point McLeay Mission, quite recently, said that he had no sympathy with work for Half-castes as it was shifting the responsibility from those who ought to bear it and condoning sin. As this idea may be shared by others, the Committee think it well to point out that the children, other than Aboriginals, now being reared at the Mission are of Half-caste or Half-caste and Native parentage and were born in wedlock. That irregularities should have occurred is a blot on the whites but furnishes no excuse for denying home and education to the Race now growing up.[184]

The numbers of Ngarrindjeri of the full descent were boosted when the last few 'independents' who had been holding out on the Coorong, were finally forced into the station, but these were mostly elderly people; and in any case, they suffered severely during the years of terrible mortality — 1905 to 1912. And whereas, in 1897 the superintendent had confidently asserted in his report that there was no likelihood of the Ngarrindjeri dying out, by 1908 the policy of the Association had become that of 'smoothing the dying pillow'.[185]

In reality there was no reason why the Ngarrindjeri of the full descent should not also have flourished and increased, had proper facilities and health care been provided. By the late 1930's the full-blood populations of Australia began to increase, and they have continued to do so ever since, but by this time it was too late for the Ngarrindjeri. However, in the period 1889-1911 it was not too late, as Dr Ramsay Smith observed. Much of what Ramsay Smith wrote about Aborigines in general clearly referred to the Ngarrindjeri — the people with whom he was most familiar and in whom he was most interested. In 1909 the chief medical officer wrote:

> The problem of what to do with the race, the most interesting at present on earth, and the least deserving to be exterminated by us, and the most wronged at our hands, is not a difficult one to solve, were a solution really desired.[186]

YEARS OF CLIMAX AND DECLINE (1899-1911).

Today we are all much the poorer because a solution was not desired by the majority of the population — the voters who affected the decisions made by politicians, who, in turn, had the lives of such minority groups as the Ngarrindjeri in their hands. From the 1830's there had always been a handful of grinkaris who really did care: people like Lord Glenelg, the quaker Cock, the German missionaries, Richard Penny, George Taplin — and a few others. Without them the Aborigines would have been much worse off; but their numbers had been so few, and support for them had been so weak that the battle they fought was always of a rear-guard nature. During this crucial period, the outstanding battler was Redman, who, amongst his other contributions, tried desperately to get proper medical assistance for the Ngarrindjeri. It was his practice to send the seriously ill to Dr Everett at Meningie, but this was thirty miles away over a rough road, and he therefore attempted to arrange for Everett to make regular visits to Raukkan, for Redman was convinced that the community needed the services of a properly qualified medical officer. Monthly visits by the physician to Raukkan would have cost £25 to £30 per year,[187] but since the A.F.A. was not prepared to pay this sum, the Protector was approached. His extraordinary excuse for not agreeing to the scheme was that investigations revealed that Everett was not sufficiently well qualified![188] This occurred in 1908, when thirty people died at Raukkan: no attempt was made by the Government to provide assistance in the form of a physician whom they did consider to be sufficiently well qualified. When £30 a year was too much for a Government to spend on helping a group of its own people to survive, it is not to be wondered at that their

'passing' was considered to be inevitable.

The old and sick people on Government rations had never been given meat as part of those rations. But from May 1900 meat was also deleted from the rations which the A.F.A. gave to families working on the Mission.[189] It was still available at the lowest possible price, but from that time, it had to be bought. The theory was that this would enable wages to increase slightly, and this in turn would encourage greater industry on the part of the workers. However, the years following this were years of considerable increase in population, due to the increase in births, the breaking up of Poonindie, and the further destruction of the Ngarrindjeri environment. Population figures for March in the years 1902-1904 show the incline graphically: in 1902 there were 227; in 1903 there were 249; and in 1904 there were 272 people.[190] By 1904 there were a hundred able-bodied men on the station, and since the limited finance had now to be spread more widely, it obviously had to be spread more thinly. Wages, in fact, dropped to an average of 1/6 per day, with which a man had to buy meat, clothing, and all sundries for himself and a family, comprising (in some instances) ten or more children.[191] By this time, there was very little to be found in the form of 'natural' food supplies, to supplement the meagre diet which could be afforded on Raukkan, and doubtless the poor diet contributed substantially to the years of chronic mortality that concluded this period.

Culture

The era was one of considerable achievement in the field of non-Aboriginal culture. For the 1890 Annual General Meeting of the

A.F.A., the choir was brought from Raukkan to provide entertainment throughout the evening. The choristers, under the baton of William Holman (the teacher), performed very well, and received an encore.[192] But the cost of bringing the group to town (£8-10-0) exceeded the total of the collection taken at the meeting, so the secretary received a mild reproof, and was told not to bring the choir up again without the sanction of the Committee.[193] Apparently, the following year there were some protests at the absence of the singers, for in 1892, the Committee resolved to bring the choir to town again, to 'assist in enlivening the proceedings'.[194]

By 1894, a group of male singers had formed a Glee Club,[195] and this group was to become quite well known in and around Adelaide during the course of the next few years. In 1895, the Glee Club went to Government House to sing and to extend a welcome to the new Governor — Sir T. Fowell Buxton. The Governor was impressed, and so was everyone else, including the Register reporter who recorded that:

> In melodius voices and with much precision, the Glee Club sang Jubilee songs and part songs. The programme consisted of a verse of the National Anthem, the song "Meeting here tonight", "Village bells", "In bright mansions", "Row brothers, row", and "Farewell".[196]

Mark Wilson, who was described by the Register patronisingly (but accurately enough), as a 'very intelligent native', then went on to read an address of welcome which he composed and delivered on behalf of the Aborigines of South Australia.[197]

At the Annual General Meeting of that year, a record crowd filled the Adelaide Town Hall (including the gallery), and the only reason for the upsurge in interest would appear to lie in the excel-

lent reputation of the Glee Club, which once again provided the entertainment.[198] From time to time the Glee Club went into recess, as its members scattered in search of jobs such as shearing,[199] but the Committee were well aware of its value, both from the point of view of public relations, and, as a fund-raiser, and they pressed Holman, the conductor and organizer, to keep it going.[200] At the end of 1901 — one of the Glee Club's most successful years — Holman was fired, and it appears that the group declined shortly after his departure.[201] Holman seems to have been a much better musician than a teacher, for music flourished while he was at Raukkan, and the children's and adults' choirs, besides impressing all who heard them sing, were (as previously observed) a worthwhile money-earner. The year 1900 was their most successful twelve months. The children's choir gave a number of performances in Adelaide, — including one at Government House — and, as pointed out in the discussion on employment, it was in this year that the returns from the various concerts totalled £200.[202]

Towards the end of the era, in 1909, the A.F.A. again attempted to exploit the earning and influencing capacities of the Ngarrindjeri singers, by sending a group on tour with David Ngunaitponi and Philip Rigney as speakers. The musical items were the main attraction for the audiences, but they were really only the bait: the messages put over by the two speakers constituted the hook. Nevertheless, according to the Advertiser, the audiences found the messages even more interesting than the singing. In a patronizing report, the Advertiser correspondent stated:

But it was when the adult "David" took the platform and

> spoke of the tradition of his people, of their knowledge of astronomy, their intimacy with the science of botany, their bushcraft and folklore, that the audience gave most attention. In a simple way, and without any attempt at effect, this civilized savage spoke of the similarity of the Greek mythology and the Aboriginal fiction. He told of the knowledge of the old people, their idea that the world turned, and that certain stars had their places and their times of appearing.... He told of the lore of the natives, of their fables and traditions; touched lightly on their uncivilization; and held an interested audience for a good ten minutes in a speech unmarked by anything in the way of a faux pas.[203]

The strategy of the evening's entertainment was clearly arranged. It was David Ngunaitponi's role to show that in pre-invasion times the Aborigines were a cultured people: and that now, they were capable of reaching the heights of European civilization. His own beautiful diction and the quality of the singing reinforced this contention. Then Philip Rigney spoke to drive home the real point. The Advertiser reported it as follows:

> It was in his peroration that Philip became convincing and practical. He spoke of the country, of the beauty of it, of its possibilities, and, as he spoke, one forgot that he was a blackman and a civilized savage. He was an orator and a patriot — this man on the platform. "Where is there another country," he said, "one of the finest on earth — I do not know of any other but I have read of them. And it cost you nothing. Nothing in blood or treasure; nothing for purchase. It came to you easily, as it went from my people, and, if the Government only gave us a little of the best of it we would not be here tonight asking your help. Instead of that we have to come to you to solicit your assistance towards the purchase of material for roofing our huts. The settlers have burned off or otherwise destroyed ...all the grass we used to employ in thatching our cabins." It was an anticlimax, a descent from the heights of patriotic enthusiasm to the depths of practical interests. But it fitted the situation.[204]

The only major aspect of Ngarrindjeri culture which had survived to flourish during these decades was mat and basket making. This was due to the fact that the people by this time had been in-

corporated into the capitalist system; and since the collapse of the fishing industry, mat and basket making was the one traditional occupation that was at all profitable. So much was being produced in the cottages at Raukkan, that in 1898, when the Adelaide Town Hall was the venue for the Annual General Meeting, its large auditorium was decorated throughout with 'beautiful specimens of mats, baskets and other articles' made by the Ngarrindjeri.[205] And in 1910 the matting and basketry was sufficient both in quantity and quality, to warrant a stand at the Chamber of Manufacturers' Exhibition.[206] Mat and basket making was still a part of the school curriculum in 1904, and time was put aside for at least one lesson per week.[207] Mr Tom Bonney (the son of Charles Bonney), who was eighty seven in 1975, clearly remembers these lessons of seventy years ago, when all the children — including the Europeans attending the school at that time — sat around on the floor, while one of the adults, brought in for the purpose, instructed them in the art and assessed their efforts.[208]

Mat and basket making was given a fillip in 1908, when enterprising passenger boat owners began a weekly service bringing tourists from Goolwa across the lake to Raukkan. Most of these people were middle class 'pleasure trippers' who were affluent enough to be able to spend their summer holidays at Victor Harbour, which by then had become a fashionable resort. They were keen and able to buy souvenirs of their trip, and the Ngarrindjeri basket makers were only too willing to oblige. Francis reported that the tourists crowded his school every Friday throughout the summer season and were 'delighted' by the children's singing.[209] Altogether, about 2,000 people visited Raukkan in the summer of 1908-9, but in the following winter,

the jetty, which had long since needed repairs, was finally wrecked completely and this considerably diminished the tourist trade.[210] Nevertheless, it did keep going, and even in the 1940's tourists were still treating Raukkan as a human zoo, were still being delighted by the children's singing, and were still giving them lollies in precisely the same way as they gave peanuts to monkeys at another institution. The tourist trade was possibly one stimulus to industry and culture, that the Ngarrindjeri could well have done without.

In February and March of 1910, a party of Ngarrindjeri singers — nine men and three women — went on a working tour themselves. They were guests of the Tasmanian Government, which had asked the South Australian Government for assistance in carrying out the re-enactment of the foundation of the Colony by the British. There were to be historic pageants and celebrations to mark the centenary of this event, but since the Tasmanian Aborigines had been exterminated, the organizers had no-one to play the part of the original owners of the island. Accordingly, W.G. South, the South Australian protector, took the twelve Ngarrindjeri volunteers to Tasmania where they made a great impression. The Register reported that they enjoyed the holiday immensely, and that the Tasmanians very much enjoyed having them. The report continued:

> It was not merely the novelty of the Point McLeay natives' presence however, but their practical value to the managers of the pageants. Scenes were acted illustrative of the planting of the British flag on the island, and of the natural opposition of the original lords of the land. Here the visitors proved themselves worthy actors. They were attired in "possum" rugs and paint, and met with fine appreciation by the thousands of sight-seers in Hobart. Mr South and his coloured friends were picnicked and feted generously,

> and in reply the natives gave entertainments [ie concerts] which altogether astonished the Tasmanians. The boomerang throwers were always in demand, but it was not merely on the social and spectacular sides where they excelled, for they [also] conducted a crowded church service.[211]

This incident provided a splendid example of the ability of the Ngarrindjeri, at this time, to excel in two cultures simultaneously -- an ability which was to be lost in succeeding decades.

Exodus

The exodus from Raukkan, which was already evident in the eighties, continued to gather momentum during the nineties and the 1900's. As the population expanded far beyond the number which Raukkan could comfortably accommodate, the A.F.A. put more pressure on people who were thought capable of living independently in the outside world. There were quite a few young people who wanted to get away from Raukkan to a new life-style in Adelaide, and a tiny minority of these actually did so. The three most outstanding young men who went to Town were Mark Wilson, David Ngunaitponi and George Rankine. The last-named had the advantage of being a graduate of the bootmaking school, and a very competent tradesman, while the other two had diverse talents, some of which have already been mentioned. With one or two exceptions, the migrants to Adelaide invariably ended up working at jobs which made demands far beneath their levels of ability and aspiration. Mark Wilson, for instance, was working as a servant to a Port Adelaide physician early in 1892 — apparently in the capacity of driver: his wages were fourteen shillings a week plus board.[212] This was hardly the kind of employment that the scholarly and dynamic ex-teacher would have found

challenging or satisfying. David Ngunaitponi, at one stage in 1900, had a job which returned twenty shillings a week,[213] but his livelihood was always to be precarious. By 1908 he had suffered a rupture[214] — probably as a result of a working accident — and had to wear a truss for the rest of his life.[215] This precluded him from engaging in most of the very few occupations open to Aborigines. Edith Ralph, in a Register article of 1907, put the case succinctly when she declared: 'Their colour — God help them! — shuts them out from so much employment for which they are capable.'[216] By this time, David Ngunaitponi had retreated once more to Raukkan.

One of the most interesting groups to leave Raukkan during this era, was the group which went individually to settle on small blocks of land at East Wellington. There were only four major families involved in this exodus, but they were important ones. The family heads were George Muckray, William MacHughes, George Karpany, and Matthew Kropinyeri. William MacHughes led the way, settling at East Wellington in 1892,[217] and the others followed as soon as they could get blocks of land. Unlike the little farms taken up earlier by John Sumner, Charles Bonney and others (including William MacHughes himself), these sections were not within easy reach of Raukkan, and although in some ways this was a slight disadvantage, there can be no doubt that the East Wellington settlers saw it as a real benefit, and one of the main attractions of the area. While not denying or relinquishing their common heritage, they nevertheless became integrated into the general population of the district. In the words of Mrs Priscilla Lindsay (one of George Karpany's daughters): 'We didn't lean on each other.'[218] The need to be independent seems

to have been the chief motivation driving these people in their determined struggle to be free of the Mission, and to live their own lives, and they would have been defeating their purpose if they had in fact 'leant on each other'.

Nevertheless, the Wellington families did not despise what they had learnt at Raukkan, nor did they hesitate to seek assistance from time to time direct from the A.F.A. — as they had a perfect right to do. It was in the Association's interest to give the Wellingtonians every encouragement, as it was at this stage trying its hardest to depopulate its own village; and since the normal channels for loans seemed to be closed to the Ngarrindjeri, the A.F.A. did provide a worthwhile service in granting small loans for the purchase of essential farm equipment. On one occasion, in May 1901, the Committee sent its superintendent up to East Wellington on a fact-finding expedition, and Garnett's report to the A.F.A. on his visit is quite illuminating. Amongst his other comments were the following:

> George Karpaney has a numerous family of young children not attending school as some objection has been raised to children of Aborigines attending school at Wellington. He has a strong objection to them coming to school at Point McLeay. Other children of Aborigines (MacHughes' and Muckray's) are received at Wellington school on the ground that they are not "camp" Natives. This objection to Karpaney does not now hold good as he has just had a two roomed cottage erected. Can you do anything in this matter?[219]

George Karpany's objection to Raukkan is indicative of the independent attitude of these families, and it must have been galling for them when, at times, they were simply forced to swallow their pride and accept some of the facilities offered by the Association. On this occasion, the Committee was able to help in an acceptable way

by bringing pressure to bear on Wellington School. In a letter dated 4 July 1901, the Protector gave an assurance that Karpany's children would now be admitted.[220]

In discussing George Muckray, Garnett reported that:

> George Muckray is married to a white woman. He has about nine children. He also has made much progress. A cottage of four rooms: land fenced. He is a dairy farmer. He has about twelve head of cattle and owns a separator. His children milk the cows. He is a good shearer and generally industrious.[221]

Mrs Muckray was not the only grinkari woman to marry a Ngarrindjeri man: but bearing in mind the social milieu of the day, it could be accepted that a great amount of courage was needed to do so. There was every likelihood that such a wife would be despised and rejected by the European community — including her own family — and never really accepted by the Ngarrindjeri community.

Garnett observed that Matthew Kropinyeri's section was on very poor soil, and was disadvantaged by having a road all around it; but it did have the benefit of a river frontage. And speaking of William MacHughes he said:

> He has made good progress: land well fenced: has about ninety sheep and a few head of cattle. He earns money by going out as a builder. He is an active Christian Worker and much respected in the neighbourhood.[222]

William MacHughes would have been an asset to any neighbourhood, and it is not surprising that the people of Wellington greatly respected him: he was one of the most outstanding Ngarrindjeri men of modern times. As a highly skilled mason he has left an unknown number of monuments in the form of houses and other buildings scattered throughout the land of the Ngarrindjeri and beyond — quite apart from what remains of his work at Raukkan. But perhaps the building which best en-

shrines the nobility of the man, is the chapel at Wellington. Garnett discovered that William MacHughes was building this church completely without payment – at the same time as he was attempting to survive on an inadequate block. Thus we have yet another instance of the Ngarrindjeri putting into practice the tenets of the new religion they had so enthusiastically embraced; and in doing so, providing an exemplar for the invading race. The A.F.A.,on this occasion, sent £5 to Garnett for the purpose of purchasing subsistence rations to help William MacHughes and his assistants as they built the chapel.[223]

Another group of families anxious to get away from Raukkan, attempted to make a living on small blocks of land on the Coorong. They chose the Coorong because the Government had put aside several near-useless little pockets of land there and dedicated them as Aboriginal reserves. It also seems likely that those who persevered so doggedly were descended from the Coorong lakalinyerar. Ultimately, there were only two really successful families: those headed by Henry Lampard and Alfred Cameron. Others who tried included four of the original young Christians of the 1860's and 1870's — namely John Laelinyeri, Pompey Hackson, Peter Campbell and Peter Gollan. These men had long since realized the hopelessness of attempting to farm their little blocks, but had settled down instead to run a few head of sheep and cows and to supplement their meagre incomes by fishing and hunting. Their land was even poorer than that of the Wellington farms, and in addition, they had no limitless supply of fresh water — the Coorong being then, as now, salty. By 1902 it was clear that the Coorong sections were not viable as farms, and

it was acknowledged in the Annual Report that the farmers were making no headway because the soil was too poor for anything but grazing.[224] In 1906, by which time John Laelinyeri and his friends were in their fifties and sixties, most of their land was taken away and leased to Bowman and Dodd as previously described.[225]

The Coorong farmers, in common with the Wellington settlers, were attracted to the independent life of a farmer, and also repelled by what they perceived to be the increasingly oppressive and restrictive nature of Raukkan as an institution. Mr Edgar Lampard (one of Henry's sons) was a young man during this period. Now an octogenerian, he told me recently that his father had warned him not to marry a Point McLeay girl — and although very much attracted to one, he never did, but chose instead a girl from one of the other non-mission families. And various people descended from the original East Wellington families have stressed that the best thing their forebears ever did (in their opinion) was to get off the Mission at that time. Life was tougher away from it, but by leaving, they enabled themselves and their descendants to live free and proud.

The fourth major migration outlet was the sister-mission at Point Pearce on York Peninsula. This station had always been better-off than Raukkan since its inception, having begun with an area of over 17,000 acres of fairly good land, and a much smaller population to support. The majority of the people thrown off Poonindie were taken to Point Pearce in 1894, and ten years later, when Raukkan had become chronically over-populated, it was also seen as a convenient dumping ground for Raukkan men with large part-European families. Accordingly, Alfred Cameron, who had ten children in 1905, was among

those selected to migrate, along with Edward Chester, Edward Rigney, John Wilson and Crofton Giles.[226] But Cameron stayed on in the land of his forebears (as did some of the others selected) and eventually won control of the block he had long desired: namely, The Needles. A sizeable proportion of the first migrants to Point Pearce were not of Ngarrindjeri stock: Chester, for instance, was an ex-Poonindie man. But after the first trickle began in 1905, the flow to Yorke Peninsula increased to such an extent that the surnames of many of the people now living in that district indicate that they are descended from the Ngarrindjeri.

Men of Influence

As could be expected, the years 1889-1911 saw the passing of a number of the Ngarrindjeri, and some of their friends. Of the latter, the most notable were C.B. Young and F.W. Cox who both died in 1904.[227] Both had worked loyally for the A.F.A. and the Ngarrindjeri from the inception of the Association; both must have given many hundreds of hours of their free time during the forty seven years of their involvement; and their time was far from being the only thing they gave. When surveying the bleak history of European interaction with the Aborigines, it is as well to remember that the entire race of Europeans cannot be written off as barbarians: there have always been a few who saw the moral issues clearly, who were moved by human compassion for their fellow man, who were revolted by the iniquities they witnessed. They have often made mistakes that we, with the benefit of a century's hindsight, find easy to criticize (such as Cox's 'editing' of Taplin's journal quotations.) They have always

been too few in number, and unable to influence enough of their fellow Europeans: but without them, the Aborigines would have been infinitely worse off. Cox and Young — one a minister, the other a farmer — were two of the best grinkari friends the Ngarrindjeri had, and their effort deserves to be acknowledged.

In 1908, Redman had the melancholy duty of reporting the deaths of thirty of the Ngarrindjeri at Raukkan. His report included the following passage:

> Among the older ones were James Unaipon, the first Native on the Lower Murray to embrace Christianity more than 50 years ago, and Peter Gollan, a faithful follower of the Master for over 40 years. The lives of these two men were an influence for good, and when the call came, they were ready, and both expressed the wish to depart and be with Him whom they so much loved, and had faithfully served for so many years.[228]

Perhaps it is just as well that James Ngunaitponi did die in 1908 in his seventy fourth year. As a boy, he had known life before the European invasion. As a youth he had witnessed the usurpation of the Piltindjeri land, the destruction of the lakalinyeri as a viable group, and the undermining of the nation as a whole. As a fully initiated young man, he had turned to Christianity as offering some hope to himself and his dispossessed people. And as a Christian he had attempted to implement the teachings of the Gospel much more successfully than the vast majority of the invading race. In the space of one life-time, James Ngunaitponi had seen his people go from being a free, proud, self-governing nation, rich in culture, material assets and traditions; to being a pauperized and dependent group of trespassers in their own land; completely at the mercy of a foreign power, and despised by many as being less than human. But in 1908 there was still hope: the little village of the Ngarrindjeri

had grown in size and beauty until it had few rivals anywhere; and there were still people with vision and vigour who were prepared to stand up and fight for the nation; there were still a few grinkaris — like Ambrose Redman — who knew what the Ngarrindjeri had been in the past and who were trying to help them in the present and the future; and there were clever young people like James's son, David, who positively excelled in the European arts and sciences. In other words, when James Ngunaitponi died, the prospect was far from bright, but it was not hopeless either: yet in a few years time, even the most sanguine optimist would have held out little hope that the Ngarrindjeri could ever flourish again. Most significantly, the Ngarrindjeri were a different people after his death from what they had been before: for in dying, James Ngunaitponi deprived his people of their most outstanding leader in modern times.

James Ngunaitponi was survived by his wife (Nymbulda) and his two sons: David and Creighton. David was already quite well known outside Raukkan at this time, and in the future he was to become Australia's best-known Aborigine. By comparison with his father, David was lacking in knowledge of the ancient culture (and having never been made narumbe, there was little that he was entitled to know): but he compensated for this by acquiring and cultivating more accomplishments in the European arts and sciences. David Ngunaitponi was eventually to become a legend in his own lifetime, and by just being what he was — an extremely cultured and talented person -- he did a great deal of good for his people: he was a living refutation of many of the ridiculous myths concerning Aborigines that were widely circulated and believed by grinkaris at

that time. Because he was such a legendary figure, many myths grew up, in turn, concerning David Ngunaitponi. Amongst other pieces of mis-information to be found in print are that he attended St. Peters College,[229] that he was an ordained clergyman,[230] and that he went to England to meet the Queen[231] — all of which, along with various other non-facts written about him, are quite erroneous. It was surprising to find that even in 1907, these wild statements had begun to circulate. Describing the Easter service at Raukkan in that year, Register correspondent Edith Ralph reported that:

> The organ was faultlessly played by a pure black whose mother was queen of the tribe in days gone by. He is still regarded by the natives, though by circumstances deprived of his own position, as one who should not be expected to do rough work and whose slightest hint as organist they unquestioningly obey.[231]

Quite apart from the preposterous notion that because Pullum was the rupulle, his daughter (Nymbulda Ngunaitponi) must have been a queen, it is interesting to see that David's inability to undertake heavy labour (because of his rupture) is ascribed here to his alleged princely standing! It is also of interest that the traditional Ngarrindjeri love of music and sensitivity towards it, should be misinterpreted in this way.

One person who did at least know the facts (even if he coloured them with the customary patronization) was Francis Garnett, who was the superintendent at Raukkan during the years 1900-1906. Garnett later became the Chief Protector, so he remained in touch with the Ngarrindjeri; and looking back in 1931 to his years as superintendent, he wrote a brief article concerning David Ngunaitponi. It is worth quoting at length, because its statements of fact are corroborated by other sources. Entitled The Most Extraordinary Black

Man in Australia, the article says, inter alia:

> At one end of the scale stands a poor blackfellow eating grubs: and the other end stands David Unaipon, the cleverest Native Australian ever known, the brainiest man in the whole black population of thirty thousand.
> David has astonished the professors of the universities of Sydney and Melbourne by the breadth of his intelligence and his capacity for absorbing knowledge, and he has become a recognised authority on that branch of knowledge known as ballistics which has to do with the hurling of projectiles over great distances. [From childhood] David's many sided nature and abilities steadily developed. His versatility was wonderful. He has always been interested in mechanics. He made an improvement on ordinary sheep shears which proved very promising. The age old problem of perpetual motion has for years fascinated him and he has made various models which have shown much ingenuity.
> Like the great Hebrew king whose name he bears, David has a great love of music, especially sacred music. The organ is his favourite instrument, and his tuneful playing has delighted many hundreds of white visitors to the Mission.
> He is a born orator and elocutionist. Monthly entertainments were held at the Mission Station, when the natives would generally sing and recite pieces of a light, humourous character. David, however, refused to waste his time over memorizing such literature and would only recite extracts from Milton's Paradise Lost or something equally impressive ....
> Point McLeay at length became too small for our expanding genius, David's affinity is for the ways and thought and life of white men, and for years he has travelled through the Australian States, lecturing and preaching. He is a great reader of books of science and philosophy, and he talks familiarly of evolution and anthropology. He has made collections of native legends. .... He is a lover and champion of his own race, but his love of the intellectual life has made him a wanderer far from his kith and kin, and enabled him to make himself at home in the cities of white people.
> Of course, he is very human. Like many other men of note he is only a second rate financier. Some of the inevitable weaknesses of the self-made man can be easily seen in him. But he is careful concerning his appearance, pure in his language, courteous in his manner. He is a non-smoker and teetotaller. He is an Australian Aboriginal, but he also belongs to Nature's Aristocracy.[233]

The foregoing description, based on Garnett's close contact with David Ngunaitponi in the early nineteen hundreds, gives an accurate impression of the man at that time, and provides a back-

ground which helps in understanding much that occurred later in his life. He was, for instance, continuously in financial difficulties for most of his ninety six years! And he was still wrestling with mechanical problems and theories, practically till the day he died. In later years, he was to use his ingenious mechanical devices in much the same way as he and Philip Rigney used the Raukkan choir (as previously described) for propaganda purposés. People would attend his advertised lectures to see the remarkable machines in action, and in fact they would see them. But they would also be given a lecture on the plight of the Aborigines of Australia, and be told what was needed to be done by the dominant race. Nevertheless the inventions were no mere gimmicks, and a thorough search through the Commonwealth Patents Office has revealed nineteen applications for patents taken out by 'Unaipon, D' or his assignees. They are spread from 1909 to 1944. None of the applications, as far as could be ascertained, was proceeded with, but there could be several reasons for this, not the least unlikely of which would be lack of finance.

There is a belief, common among the Ngarrindjeri today, that David Ngunaitponi was cheated out of his first and most practical invention: namely the shearing mechanism mentioned by Garnett. In the only available published history of the development of mechanical shearing (an Australian invention), no mention is made of the man or his work.[234] But he took out provisional patent number 15,624 entitled Mechanical Motion in 1909: he ratified it in 1910; and in May of that year, the Advertiser carried an interesting article concerning his invention. In part, the article reads:

For five years he attempted to solve the hopeless problem of

> perpetual motion as applied to machinery, and in the course of his various experiments, discovered what he describes as a new method of dealing with the law of gravitation, that is, by diverting the attraction to a horizontal instead of a perpendicular movement. He described his discovery to Professor Chapman of the Adelaide University, who advised Unaipon to apply it to machinery. .... He has altered the mechanism of a machine sheep shears by a device by which the curvilineal motion of the shears is converted into a straight line movement. .... The new mechanism, which is still kept secret, has been patented, and the inventor states that the principle can be applied to other machinery. It can be made to give a square, triangular, or any geometrical movement required.[235]

If indeed the invention had been fully patented, there would still be drawings and specifications of it in the Patent's Office, but as it was allowed to lapse, no such details exist. Thus the truth about the matter will probably never be known.

It will be seen from the foregoing how it came about that even in the period up to 1911, legends had grown up about this remarkable man, whom Garnett described as 'living an intellectual life which is head and shoulders above tnat of the average white man.'[236] But the realities are interesting enough on their own, and are in no need of garnishing. Just as Tooreetparne was the embodiment of all that was best in the old culture unsullied by European influence; and James Ngunaitponi personified the high point of the marriage of the two cultures; so David Ngunaitponi was to represent, both for the Ngarrindjeri and for Europeans throughout Australia, the completely Europeanized, cultivated Aborigine. The tragedy of the Ngarrindjeri decline since 1911 would be dramatically illustrated by searching for the archetypal Ngarrindjeri man of today, and comparing him culturally, physically, socially and spiritually with any of these three men.

YEARS OF CLIMAX AND DECLINE (1899-1911).

A pattern began to emerge which has distinct parallels in other countries where racial minority groups are rejected and suppressed. The people who do reveal outstanding talents in various fields are accepted into the majority group on the grounds that they are most unlike the rest of the minority group, and are really 'one of us.' This normally has the effect of neutralizing the person who has been 'honoured' by acceptance, and also of rendering him useless as a leader for the people he has left behind — who naturally resent his defection. While many did desert their people in this way, David Ngunaitponi, to his credit, was always to insist and emphasize the fact that he was a Ngarrindjeri man — not a European with dark skin. Nevertheless, he was unable to take his people with him, and most of his active life was spent among the grinkaris trying to influence them for the sake of his people, rather than amongst his people giving leadership. And some of the Ngarrindjeri resented him for doing so.

Yet the situation was such that there was very little scope for Ngarrindjeri leadership any more. As the years passed, and the opportunities for living independently were drastically reduced, the Ngarrindjeri became increasingly institutionalized. The village of Raukkan may have looked like a little Utopia, but it was, in fact, an institution somewhat akin to a very benevolently run concentration camp. And in such an institution, the important people are not one's fellow prisoners — no matter how outstanding they may be: the men of real importance to everyone are the officers, and in particular, the commandant or superintendent. By 1912, the situation where a man like Tooreetparne could come and go as he pleased, and treat the

superintendent kindly, but with a certain air of condescension, would have been completely impossible. If a man wanted his family to live in a cottage and have sufficient food to subsist — ie if he wanted his family to survive — he simply had to accept a subservient role. This trend was to continue throughout the following half century.

It seems most probable that Redman appreciated the fact that the aim of the grinkari 'officers' should have been to work themselves out of a job. He had tried to resign in 1907, and finally did so at the close of 1911. Both the Association and the Ngarrindjeri pressured him to stay, and it is indicative of the standing of this man in the people's eyes that (to my knowledge) he was the only officer whose appointment drew for the Committee a congratulatory letter from a representative of the Ngarrindjeri.[237] It is somewhat frustrating to look back to those times and see the number of superb leaders that there would have been to choose from, had a genuine start been made in handing over the reins to the Ngarrindjeri. In 1974, when control of Raukkan was finally handed back to them, there were no Matthew Kropinyeris, no Mark Wilsons, no David Ngunaitponis to lead the way: a half century of deliberate suppresion of leadership potential had seen to that.

If the A.F.A., as a body, could not grasp the fact that its ultimate and urgent aim during this period should have been the promotion of self-determination, there were certainly individuals who could. For instance, in August 1893, when Baker, the original bootmaking instructor, resigned his position, it was suggested at a Committee meeting that one of the Ngarrindjeri be placed in charge of the factory. However, according to the minutes, there was 'some

difference of opinion as to the Wisdom of such a course', and the proposal was not implemented.[238] In December 1909 a letter was published in the Register which stated in part:

> Having read that certain Aborigines and children have been lecturing and singing in order to procure funds wherewith to improve their dwellings, I hope they will succeed, but I would like to know how it is that after fifty years mission work at Pt. McLeay there is a need for the people themselves going around for funds to roof their "houses". .... It appears that chapels, schoolrooms, and superintendent's and teacher's residences are all built out of funds collected "for the mission", and then the poor natives' houses are left to a sort of chance work. .... It seems evident that competent superintendents could be selected from the natives.[239]

A few years later, Walter Hutley, an ex-head teacher at Raukkan school, visited the village and suggested to the A.F.A. that one of the Ngarrindjeri should be placed in charge of the store.[240] After the Government assumed control, Dan Wilson (Jr) more or less ran the store for thirty six years — but he was never officially given charge of it, nor was his responsible work ever recognized financially.[241] In 1909 Redman instituted an interesting and far-sighted scheme aimed at promoting Ngarrindjeri involvement in decision-making and control. Reporting to the Association that year, Redman said:

> ...the work of this council has proved of much benefit, and the fact of these nine additional helpers is a great factor in keeping things right. The council has met frequently, and discussed the well-being of the Mission generally, and has been of great assistance to the Officers.[242]

The setting up of this council was endorsed by the Committee, when Dalton, on an official visit to Raukkan wrote:

> I am glad to note that the Native Council appointed by the Superintendent is doing excellent work, and its appointment was certainly a step in the right direction.[243]

One could scarcely fail to agree with Dalton on this point, and it comes as a surprise and disappointment to find no other reference to

them except in the Annual Report of the following year, when Redman's assistant, H.E. Read, wrote:

> During the latter part of the year the Council of Native helpers made its exit from the scene of action. This is to be regretted, as during their existence, good work was effected, which indeed was a check to all misdemeanour. The reappointment of this Council upon a proper and substantial basis would, I consider, be for the people's good.[244]

Unfortunately, the question of what had happened to subvert the functioning of the nascent council, will almost certainly remain one of those teasing, unanswerable problems with which Ngarrindjeri history abounds. But the point is, that an attempt was made to involve the Ngarrindjeri in the administration, that all reports on the scheme were very promising, but that for some unknown reason the system broke down. This was the optimum period for handing back power to the Ngarrindjeri — a time when there were still some older men and women who were well versed in the ancient traditions, as well as some like William Kropinyeri who were truly bi-cultural, and some of the younger generation, such as Matthew Kropinyeri, David Ngunaitponi and Mark Wilson, who excelled in the introduced culture. But the A.F.A. failed to take advantage of the situation, and the opportunity was lost: from now on, with every year that passed, the position became less ideal, the talented leaders fewer in number, and the people as a whole, more resigned to a somewhat purposeless existence.

In January 1911, a visiting health inspector could write:

> Having had to live among the black races for a number of years, I have never yet come across an institution, so well conducted as the Point McLeay Mission Station. During my stay here since the 6th inst. I had the opportunity of visiting the homes of the Natives, and the dormitories, and

> was surprised to see how clean and tidy the homes and dormitories were kept.
> The interest the Natives take in their township, and the good feeling that exists between one another, much impressed me.[245]

Three months later, C. Eaton Taplin observed that 'There seems to be perfect harmony among the natives.'[246] Unfortunately this happy condition was not to last very far into the succeeding period: as far as Raukkan was concerned, the summit had been reached — and passed.

Late in 1911 Matthew Kropinyeri wrote a shorthand letter to his friend A.S. Jackman, an Adelaide businessman, and concluded with the remark (transcribed by Jackman):

> Sorry to tell you that we are shortly, I fear, to lose the services of our old and very much esteemed friend at the mission, Mr Redman, whose place, I am sure, will be most difficult to replace.[247]

The departure of Ambrose Redman, in January 1912, was a significant turning point in Ngarrindjeri history. Because he was such a superior man, he had no delusions of racial superiority, as so many of his inferior successors did. On the contrary, his perspicacity and his great humanitarian strengths enabled him to appreciate the qualities of the Ngarrindjeri, that lesser grinkaris, who lacked those qualities, could never see, let alone understand. Redman's final report to the A.F.A. included this characteristic remark:

> We have learned to regard a number of the natives with great respect, and in many ways they are a pattern to the white man.[248]

CHAPTER VI FOOTNOTES.

[1]Minute Book II 6 May 1889.

[2]Ibid. 10 May 1889.

[3]Ibid. 7 June 1889.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Minute Book III 14 October 1889.

[6]Ibid. 23 August 1889.

[7]Report of sub-committee 14 April 1892 incorporated in Minute Book III.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Minute Book III 5 May 1892.

[10]Ibid. 26 May 1892.

[11]Ibid. 20 October 1892.

[12]Ibid. 10 January 1893.

[13]Ibid. 20 October 1892.

[14]Ibid. 2 Novermber 1892.

[15]Church Book 7 July 1889.

[16]Minute Book III 29 July 1890.

[17]Ibid. 29 August 1890 and 23 September 1890.

[18]Ibid. 15 January 1891.

[19]Register 2 April 1891.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Church Book 29 April 1893.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Annual Report 1895.

[24]Annual Report 1897.

[25]Minute Book II 13 March 1885.

[26]Annual Report 1894.

[27]Minute Book III 21 April 1893.

CHAPTER VI FOOTNOTES.

[28]Ibid. 15 September 1893.

[29]Ibid. 24 November 1893.

[30]Annual Report 1894.

[31]Annual Report 1895.

[32]Advertiser 26 November 1895.

[33]Visitors Book II 26 October 1886.

[34]Ibid. 18 November 1896.

[35]Register 28 November 1896.

[36]Minute Book IV 23 March 1900.

[37]Ibid. 6 April 1900.

[38]Ibid. 13 November 1902.

[39]Ibid. 9 December 1902.

[40]Ibid. 4 January 1904.

[41]Annual Report 1904

[42]Ibid.

[43]Annual Report 1905.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Minute Book IV 30 January 1906.

[46]Figures taken from Annual Reports for respective years.

[47]Annual Report 1908.

[48]Annual Report 1910.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Minute Book IV 25 May 1900.

[51]Annual Reports 1909 and 1912.

[52]Annual Report 1890.

[53]Minute Book III 26 May 1891 and 30 June 1891.

[54]Ibid. 8 October 1891.

CHAPTER VI FOOTNOTES.

[55]Annual Reports 1894, 1897, 1898.

[56]Minute Book III 7 February 1893.

[57]Annual Report 1893.

[58]Annual Reports of 1897 and 1898.

[59]Annual Report 1900.

[60]Annual Report 1902.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Annual Reports of 1903 and 1908.

[63]Annual Reports of 1898 and 1908.

[64]Minute Book IV 26 February 1892.

[65]Ibid. 5 May 1892.

[66]Annual Report 1898.

[67]Annual Report 1901.

[68]Garnett to Dalton 22 July 1902.

[69]Minute Book IV 30 January 1906.

[70]Ibid. 6 March 1906.

[71]Ibid. 22 September 1905.

[72]Ibid. 13 September 1906.

[73]Annual Report 1906.

[74]Advertiser 17 April 1907 (my emphasis)

[75]Register 23 June 1909.

[76]Annual Reports of 1910 and 1912.

[77]Visitors Book II 11 March 1910.

[78]Annual Report 1909.

[79]Ibid.

[80]Annual Report 1890.

[81]Advertiser 24 May 1963.

CHAPTER VI FOOTNOTES.

[82]Annual Reports 1894-98.

[83]Annual Reports 1883-1903.

[84]Minute Book III 23 December 1890.

[85]Ibid. 15 January 1891.

[86]Ibid. 20 February 1891.

[87]Ibid. 5 March 1891.

[88]Ibid. 28 April 1891.

[89]Ibid. 30 June 1891.

[90]Ibid. 8 September 1891.

[91]Annual Report 1892.

[92]Annual Report 1891.

[93]Annual Report 1893.

[94]Minute Book III 18 August 1893 and 8 November 1893.

[95]Annual Report 1894.

[96]Minute Book III 27 April 1894.

[97]Annual Reports 1897 and 1898.

[98]Annual Report 1898.

[99]Minute Book IV 16 November 1899.

[100]Ibid. 22 January 1900.

[101]Ibid. 5 March1900 and 6 June 1900.

[102]Annual Report 1900.

[103]Ibid.

[104]See Annual Reports of 1902-06.

[105]Minute Book IV 31 March 1914.

[106]Minute Book III 24 November 1893.

[107]Observer 4 August 1894.

[108]Annual Report 1895.

CHAPTER VI FOOTNOTES.

[109]Ibid. It is highly probable that J.H. Angas's decision to employ an entirely Aboriginal shearing team in 1895 was related to his anger at the injustice meted out to the Poonindie Aborigines the year before. See his letter to Advertiser 22 November 1894.

[110]Annual Report 1896.

[111]Register 15 September 1910.

[112]Annual Report 1897.

[113]Annual Report 1900.

[114]Annual Report 1904.

[115]Annual Report 1901.

[116]Annual Report 1903.

[117]Annual Report 1904.

[118]Annual Report 1893.

[119]Annual Report 1905.

[120]Ibid.

[121]Ibid.

[122]Ibid.

[123]Ibid.

[124]Register 8 December 1905.

[125]Visitors Book II 15 May 1906.

[126]Annual Report 1907.

[127]Visitors II 2 June 1908.

[128]Annual Report 1908.

[129]Minute Book IV 7 February 1908.

[130]Annual Report 1910.

[131]Annual Report 1909.

[132]Annual Report 1910.

[133]Annual Report 1911.

[134]Ibid.

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[135]Commonwealth Year Book 1935 p.373. Quoted in Louis L.J. & Turner, L.: The Depression of the 1930's North Melbourne, Cassell Australia, 1970. p.48.

[136]Annual Reports of 1889, 1911 and 1913.

[137]Minute Book III 17 June 1889.

[138]Ibid. 25 October 1892.

[139]Ibid. 2 November 1892.

[140]Ibid. 24 November 1893.

[141]Ibid. 28 August 1894.

[142]Ibid.

[143]Minute Book III 8 October 1891.

[144]Ibid. 27 January 1892.

[145]Ibid. 5 May 1892.

[146]Ibid. 22 June 1892.

[147]Register 3 December 1892.

[148]Report of the Colonial Committee of the Free Church of Scotland 1893.

[149]See Duguid, Charles, No Dying Race Adelaide Rigby 1963 Chapter 1 and Duguid, Charles, Doctor and The Aborigines Adelaide Rigby 1972 Chapters 10 & 11.

Dr Duguid was himself responsible for winning back Smith of Dunesk money to its proper purpose when some of it was used to help establish Ernabella Mission in the North West of South Australia.

[150]Annual Report 1898.

[151]Annual Report 1900.

[152]Annual Report 1901.

[153]Annual Report 1902.

[154]Ibid.

[155]Annual Reports of 1903 and 1904.

[156]Annual Report 1904.

[157]Minute Book IV p.144.

[158]Annual Report 1905.

CHAPTER VI. FOOTNOTES.

[159]Minute Book IV 18 August 1905.

[160]Ibid. 22 March 1907 and 21 April 1907.

[161]Advertiser 16 April 1907.

[162]Advertiser 17 April 1907.

[163]Ibid.

[164]Ibid.

[165]Ibid.

[166]Ibid. 5 July 1907.

[167]Ibid. 9 July 1907.

[168]Annual Reports of 1910 and 1911.

[169]Annual Report 1903.

[170]Annual Report 1904.

[171]Annual Report 1910.

[172]Minute Book III 17 April 1890.

[173]Ibid. 29 May 1890.

[174]Ibid. 19 June 1890 and Minute Book IV 24 May 1901.

[175]Minute Book III 26 May 1890.

[176]Annual Report 1894.

[177]Annual Report 1902.

[178]Annual Report 1895.

[179]The Poonindie Trust was the body formed to administer the £1,000 compensation grudgingly given by the Government when it forced the closure of Poonindie in 1894.

[180]Minute Book IV 7 July 1899.

[181]Ibid. 19 February 1901.

[182]Ibid. 24 January 1908 and 7 February 1908.

[183]Ibid. 28 September 1908.

[184]Annual Report 1909.

[185]Annual Reports 1897 and 1908.

CHAPTER VI. FOOTNOTES.

[186]Ramsay Smith, W, The Aborigines of Australia p.18. Reprinted from the Official Year Book of the Commonwealth No 3 1909.

[187]Minute Book IV 7 February 1908.

[188]Ibid. and Annual Report 1908.

[189]Minute Book IV 25 May 1900.

[190]Ibid. p.134.

[191]Ibid.

[192]Annual Report 1890.

[193]Minute Book III 15 January 1891.

[194]Ibid. 9 August 1892.

[195]Ibid. 10 August 1894.

[196]Register 12 December 1895.

[197]Ibid.

[198]Annual Report 1895.

[199]Annual Report 1898.

[200]Minute Book IV 17 October 1901.

[201]Ibid. 9 December 1902.

[202]Annual Report 1900.

[203]Advertiser 13 December 1909.

[204]Ibid.

[205]Annual Report 1898.

[206]Annual Report 1910.

[207]Annual Report 1904.

[208]Taped interview with Mr Tom Bonney and Mrs Hilda Blessios of Mount Gambier, October 1975.

[209]Annual Report 1908.

[210]Annual Report 1909.

[211]Register 14 March 1910.

CHAPTER VI. FOOTNOTES.

[212]Minute Book IV 30 March 1892.

[213]Ibid. 9 November 1900.

[214]Ibid. 24 January 1908.

[215]Ibid. 7 February 1908.

[216]Register 6 April 1907.

[217]Minute Book III 5 May 1892.

[218]Interview with Mrs Priscilla Lindsay at Tailem Bend, October 1975.

[219]Minute Book IV p.74.

[220]Ibid. 13 August 1901.

[221]Ibid. p.74.

[222]Ibid.

[223]Ibid. 13 June 1901.

[224]Annual Report 1902.

[225]Minute Book IV 30 January 1906.

[226]Ibid. 22 September 1905.

[227]Annual Report 1904.

[228]Annual Report 1908.

[229]Horner Jack, Vote Fergusson for Aboriginal Freedom Sydney, Australia & New Zealand Book Co., 1974 p.178.

[230]The Sydney Bulletin 3 January 1934.

[231]Advertiser 8 February 1976 and The News 10 February 1967.

[232]Register 6 April 1907.

[233]Article by Francis Garnett, published in My Magazine July 1931.

[234]Wheelhouse Francis, Digging Stick to Rotary Hoe Adelaide Seal, 1972.

[235]Advertiser 10 May 1910.

[236]Garnett Francis, My Magazine July 1931.

CHAPTER VI. FOOTNOTES.

[237]Letter from Matthew Kropinyeri to W.E. Dalton (Hon Sec A.F.A.) 19 March 1903.

[238]Minute Book III 18 August 1893.

[239]Register 20 December 1909 (my emphasis)

[240]Report by Walter Hutley to the A.F.A. : Easter 1915 (included in Minute Book V).

[241]Taped interview with Mrs Rebecca Wilson (1973) and information from Mrs Leila Rankine.

[242]Annual Report 1909.

[243]Visitors Book II 23 November 1909.

[244]Annual Report 1910.

[245]S. Kirkpatrick, Health Inspector of Schools, writing in the Visitors Book II 12 January 1911.

[246]Visitors Book II 17 April 1911.

[247]Register 1 December 1911.

[248]Annual Report 1912.

CHAPTER VII. THE FINAL YEARS OF A.F.A. CONTROL (1911-1915).

The Aborigines' Act

In 1911, South Australia finally acquired an Aborigines Act — and was the last State with a sizeable Aboriginal population to do so. As the major body concerned with Aborigines in South Australia, the Aborigines' Friends' Association had been pressing for appropriate legislation to be passed since the 1880's, but to no avail. In 1899, an Aborigines Bill passed through the House of Assembly but was thrown out by the Legislative Council. This particular bill was not of much interest to the A.F.A. nor the Ngarrindjeri, because it was chiefly concerned with the Aborigines of the Northern Territory — then a part of South Australia. In that country there was indeed an urgent need for legislation to be passed to ensure at least minimal protection for the Aborigines, in the face of savage European advances; and accordingly a Bill was drafted by Charles Dashwood, Government Resident and Judge of the Northern Territory. The 1899 Bill had weaknesses, but nevertheless it would have afforded some protection for the victims of the invasion of the Northern Territory. However, the Legislative Council was as much the house of landed interests in 1899 as it had been in 1860, and the members correctly perceived that the Bill, if passed, would place some controls on the exploitation of Aboriginal labour. For this reason, a Select Committee was formed to enquire into the Aborigines Bill, and after taking evidence, it predictably recommended that the Bill should be withdrawn.

The defeat of Judge Dashwood's proposals, at the hands of the Legislative Council, had the effect of discouraging succeeding governments from attempting to introduce further legislation for the

protection and advancement of Aborigines. Nevertheless, the A.F.A. kept reminding politicians of the need, and the newspapers once again supported the Association in this regard. The newspapers were beginning to look beyond the southerners to the more obvious needs in the north, and were pressing for a protection policy similar to the policy introduced in Queensland in 1897.[1] This was, in fact, the piece of legislation upon which Dashwood had based his proposals of 1899.

Eventually Andrew Kirkpatrick, the Chief Secretary in Tom Price's ministry, was able to announce in August 1908, that the Government had a Bill 'in type' to deal with 'questions relating to the Aborigines'. Kirkpatrick conceded that: 'Why legislation which is admittedly urgently needed has been so long delayed, is a matter which requires explanation.'[2] The explanation he gave was that: '...it was an awkward task to draft a Bill that would have the desired effect.'[3] So awkward was it, in fact, that Price's 'lib-lab' government lost office (on 5 June 1909) before it could pass the long-awaited Bill. Thus, the Northern Territory remained, in the words of one prominent jurist:

> ...the only portion of Australia having a considerable native population which possesses no legislation worthy of a moment's consideration.[4]

Archibald Peake's 'Liberal' government then held office for a year, but it also failed to introduce any Aboriginal legislation, so that it was not until the first purely Labour ministry came to power, that South Australia's first Aborigines Act was passed through both houses.

John Verran, the new premier and Commissioner of Public

Works, took personal charge of the Bill, and although he only took office on 3 June 1910, the Bill was drafted and ready for presentation to the parliament two months later, in August. This first Labour government achieved a great deal in its one year and 259 days in office,[5] and to do so it had to work quickly: the presentation of an Aborigines Bill so promptly after all parties had agreed on its necessity (but achieved nothing) for well over a decade, is typical of the energetic approach adopted by Verran and his cabinet. Commenting on the overdue legislation, the Advertiser editorialist observed:

> ...there was no valid reason why a workable statute should not have been in operation years ago. There is small doubt that this would have been the case but for the hostile attitude to Mr Dashwood's Bill of the Legislative Council, which fell back on the old expedient of shelving it by referring it to a Select Committee. Meanwhile matters have been going from bad to worse with the people whom it was meant to benefit.[6]

Commendable though the Government's vigour was, the new Act was founded on a glaring and fundamental error. It was designed for the protection of embattled tribal people, and for this reason, it was modelled on the Queensland Aborigines Act and the Western Australian Aborigines Act (which in any case was copied mainly from Queensland). Thus, the South Australian Act was primarily suited to dealing with the situation which obtained in Queensland, North Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Yet 1910 was the very year in which South Australia handed over the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth Government! Clearly, both the newspaper editorialists and the legislators were most concerned with the state of affairs beyond the borders of South Australia in an area over which,

by the time the Act became law, they had little influence and no jurisdiction. It is true that there were still tribal people living in the northern deserts of South Australia (as indeed there are in the nineteen seventies) but their numbers were small compared with the non-tribal southerners, and in any case, at that time they were under no great threat, as so many of the Territorians certainly were.

The Register's editorial comment on the Bill indicates that it had apparently overlooked the existence of the southern people whose achievements it had recorded from time to time. Amongst other observations, the paper stated:

> Unfortunately for the Australian Aborigines they have no representative leaders competent to give voice to their sentiments. This Bill is an eloquent admission that serious grievances exist, and that the blacks need special protection against a certain class of whites who would profit from their degradation. .... The two races stand widely apart in their ideals and attainments, and there is no bond to unite them. The white man with a consciousness of infinite superiority, is impatient of the ignorant black and his primitive customs, and the latter, unable to appreciate the reasons for this attitude, gloomily resigns himself to dull and stagnant isolation. .... One of the chief aims is to stamp out the revolting system of slavery to which many black and half-caste girls have been subjected, and which, more than anything else, has at times provoked murderous reprisals upon brutal white men.[7]

It will be seen that, for the Ngarrindjeri, such a protective bill was almost a century too late, and ridiculously out of date. Far from standing 'widely apart' in their ideals and attainments, the aspirations of the majority of the Ngarrindjeri were almost identical to those of the grinkari majority: and the attainments of quite a few of them were far superior. They did have outstanding leaders and spokesmen — as the Register itself had recorded — and the practice of enslaving women which caused friction between the

THE FINAL YEARS OF A.F.A. CONTROL (1911-1915).

Ngarrindjeri and the Kangaroo Island sealers had operated in the period beginning 1810 — not 1910. When applied to the Ngarrindjeri, the new Act was an odious travesty of justice and an oppressive insult to the people. Amongst other monstrous depredations on the fundamental human rights of the Aborigines, was Section 10, which effectively deprived all Aborigines of all rights and controls over their own children. In part, this infamous clause reads:

> The Chief Protector shall be legal guardian of every Aboriginal and half-caste child, notwithstanding that any such child has a parent or other relative living, until such child attains the age of twenty one years.[8]

Under Section 17, another fundamental freedom was lost. Paragraph I of this section states that:

> The Chief Protector may cause any Aboriginal or half-caste to be kept within the boundaries of any reserve or Aboriginal institution, or to be removed from one reserve or Aboriginal institution and kept therein.[9]

The only other people who could be treated in this way were criminals and lunatics, but even these people had to be proven to have committed an offence, or properly certified insane: the possession of a dark skin, however, was enough evidence for a man or woman to be confined to an institution for life without recourse to the courts. As has often been said: in Australia a person could be gaoled for committing an offence — or for being an Aborigine.

While on the reserve or in the institution, Aborigines were, from now on, to be wholly at the mercy of the superintendent, who was invested with extraordinary powers. Amongst other rights, the superintendent or 'protector' was entitled to:

> ...inflict summary punishment by way of imprisonment, not exceeding fourteen days, upon Aborigines and half-castes living upon a reserve or within the district under his

> charge, who, in the judgement of such protector, are guilty of any crime, serious misconduct, neglect of duty, gross insubordination or wilful breach of any regulation.[10]

Even if the protectors had been highly trained, sensitive, compassionate and upright men, this clause would have constituted a flagrant abnegation of basic legal rights: but since scarcely any of the superintendents during the time the Act was in force, had any training at all for anything at all; and since a number of them were palpably lacking in sensitivity, moral rectitude, and intelligence, the kind of abuse to which South Australian Aborigines were now open, can well be imagined. It is difficult to see how this particular clause could even be considered constitutional, since it was a clear violation of Act 31 Charles II, C2 (1679) — the Habeas Corpus Act.

In short, this incredible piece of legislation gave the Chief Protector of Aborigines and his delegates absolute power over every Aborigine's or part Aborigine's person; together with his children, his property, his money, his dwelling, his education, his employment and in fact his whole life. Regulations under the Act, which were added in 1917 and 1919, further increased the powers of superintendents and further eroded what vestiges of human rights still remained with the Aborigines. Under these additional regulations, Aborigines could be summarily fined by the superintendent for not closing a gate,[11] or for being untidily dressed[12] — amongst the many other 'misdemeanors' listed: even the times by which they had to rise in the morning were stipulated![13] Simply for failing to obey an order, an Aborigine could be fined £10 or gaoled, with or without hard labour, for two months:[14] he could be expelled from

the reserve which might have been his home since birth;[15] and furthermore an area or town could be declared 'out of bounds' and all Aborigines prevented from entering it.[16]

A thorough examination of this Act, and a full appreciation of its implications, could well lead one to the conclusion that it was conceived and drafted by evil men who were intent upon persecuting, humiliating and destroying a racial minority. Such was far from the case: they were well disposed men steeped in the racial prejudices of the day, who were doing what they considered to be best for a people about whom they obviously knew very little. However, it would have been small consolation to the Ngarrindjeri, to realize that their persecutors were kindly men; and that they were being victimized with the best of intentions. The South Australian Aborigines Act became law on the 7 December 1911: its principal sections remained in force for over half a century, and during those years it caused inestimable harm to be done to the Ngarrindjeri people.

Racial Prejudice

Obviously, such an act as this could only be passed in a land where racial prejudice had reached extraordinary levels, and at about this time, racism was approaching its nadir in South Australia. It is a little difficult to understand how people could subscribe and adhere to the folk myths regarding Aborigines, when, particularly among the Ngarrindjeri, there was so much evidence to contradict them. Yet apparently people were able to hear their speeches, admire their craftwork, enjoy their music, applaud their lectures, be

moved by their sermons, enthuse over their inventions; and still claim — despite the excellence of so much they did — that they were racially inferior. In fact, by the first decade of the present century, doubts were even being cast as to whether or not the Aborigines could be classed as human beings. Darwin's theory of evolution — or rather, a misunderstanding of it — played a significant role in nurturing and supporting European theories of racial superiority. And in seraching for the 'missing link' between man and ape, many pseudo-scientists turned to the Aborigines. The newspapers reflected and encouraged the interest which people were now taking in the Aborigines as museum-pieces, and added their contribution to the common store of speculative wisdom. A typical example comes from the Register, commenting on the fossils found at Chapelle-aux-Saints in 1908:

> Most of the leading authorities are now agreed that the Australians are a homogeneous people, very low on the scale of development, if not actually the most primitive of all races. .... The bi-orbital index, for instance, is very small in the Neanderthal skull, and still more insignificant in the Pithecanthropus, but a still smaller example — obviously abnormal — has been found among the Australian Aborigines of the present day.[17]

With this kind of evidence arraigned against them, it mattered little that Matthew Kropinyeri, the master of English prose, was now mastering Pitman's shorthand method; that David Ngunaitponi was grappling with mechanical engineering problems in between organ recitals; that William MacHughes was delivering inspiring sermons from the pulpit of a church which he himself had built — for Darwin had shown that homo sapiens had descended from the apes, and if the Aborigines were not the missing link, then what was? Grinkaris were

becoming quite proud of the 'fact' that 'our Aborigines' were being discovered to be the most interesting race on earth, in that they were considered to be living relics of the stone age; although many were possibly a little disappointed to learn that the Aborigines still had to be accepted as human beings. Yet such was the case, as the Register pointed out in an article based on information taken from an American magazine, in 1914:

> The native tribes of Australia are generally considered to be at the bottom of the scale of humanity,...and probably to be inferior in mental development to many of the "stone-age" inhabitants of Europe in prehistoric ages. Yet they have every right to be considered man.
>
> Human After All
>
> Though infantile in their intellectual development, the Australian natives are thoroughly human, as can readily be seen by the cubic measurement of their brains (accepting this as one standard) 99.35 inches as compared with that of a gorilla, 30.51 inches.[18]

These amazing revelations would not have affected the northern tribal people significantly, but to the Ngarrindjeri, as avid newspaper readers, the growing tendency evident among the majority race to class Aborigines as sub-human, must have constituted an insidious attack on their morale. Especially would this have been so to the young men, who, having passed through the school and acquired a basic European education, now found themselves unable to obtain any sensible employment. And being forced to lounge around, with nothing to do, nowhere to go, and feeling absolutely helpless and worthless — it is inevitable that some of them must have thought: perhaps we really are an inferior race after all. They had acquired none of the ancient skills and high culture which, after years of intensive training and education, had become a part of men like Tooreetparne (and which gave them cause to believe that

they were distinctly superior to the Europeans): neither had they been given the opportunities to develop European skills — as, say, Mark Wilson and George Rankine had done (and which had convinced that generation that anything the Europeans could do, they could do as well — or better). The new generation had very little that could afford them some defence against the rising tide of racist propaganda, which they had to withstand in order to retain their self respect. A Ngarrindjeri man in those days had to show that he was decidedly superior, in order to be accepted by the Europeans as slightly inferior. But amongst the Ngarrindjeri, as amongst all people on earth, the majority were only ordinary, a few were less than ordinary, and an equally small minority were brilliant. For the majority of normal young people — without any particularly outstanding talents — life must have seemed rather dreary and the future lacking in hope. The very smallness of the minority group also militated against them. Given, say, that 5% of any human group are talented far above the norm, and that there were about 400 Ngarrindjeri at this time, this would mean that there were usually about 20 truly outstanding people. But 10 would have been women, who, in those days of sexual discrimination, could not have proved themselves one way or the other; and of the remaining 10 males, some would have been infants, and others would have been well advanced in years — which should have left, at any one time, very few brilliant men in the prime of life, who were in a position to mount a spirited defence of their own people. Seen in this light, it is surprising that so many outstanding figures did actually emerge from among the Ngarrindjeri; but they were, nevertheless, few enough in

numbers to allow the majority race to dismiss them as freaks, and to treat the remainder as sub-humans destined inevitably to pass away before the white race, which God and nature had intended should inhererit the earth.

The most influential fighter during these years (and up until the 1940's) was David Ngunaitponi. After the A.F.A. had refused to assist him financially with his inventing,[19] and the Government Mechanical Engineer had been distinctly discouraging in his assessment of David's work, he was appointed collector for the A.F.A., in October 1913.[20] In his first month he collected £18-12-5,[21] and since the ruling rate for collectors was 10%, his month's tramping from door to door would have earned him £1-17-3. This was hardly enough to live on, even in those days — especially considering that before suffering his rupture, he had earned £1 a week, and had still not had any money to spare. It is thus not surprising that he relinquished his post, and embarked on his first trip interstate in search of greener pastures.

Before leaving for Melbourne, David Ngunaitponi agreed to be interviewed by a reporter from the Daily Herald. This is one of the most important and revealing newspaper articles ever written on David Ngunaitponi and it is worth studying in detail. In it, the forty two year old scholar talks about his background, his education, his inventions, and some of his ideas. Amongst other things, he described how Walter Hutley had first got him thinking about mechanics, and he went on to say:

> My teacher talked about the wonderful progress made during the 19th century — progress in science, art and commerce... and mentioned also the three problems that had puzzled sci-

> ence — the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life, and perpetual motion. The latter problem attracted me. About 15 years ago I took up the study of mechanics and read all the books of philosophy I could get. I studied the laws of gravity and motion on an inclined plane, and directed my attention principally to the centre of gravity of moving bodies. I now claim that I have discovered a means by which spherical motion might be reduced to lateral motion, or, in other words, reduced by a mathematical curve to a straight line. By direct pressure to the centre I get motion.[22]

It was this concept which David Ngunaitponi had applied in practice to the improvement of machine shears. The Daily Herald reporter was most impressed by the working models which the inventor demonstrated to him, and added: 'The idea has been taken up by several firms and there is every prospect of it being widely applied.'[23] David Ngunaitponi then astounded the reporter by predicting that the polarization of light at a given point would eventually be developed to the point where the principles would form the basis of extremely powerful weapons of war. Both electric and solar energy would be harnessed for this purpose. He went on to say:

> We are gradually coming to the age where we might expect to be able to hurl lectricity, like nature does for instance, in the shape of lightning.[24]

Perhaps the most remarkable statement by Ngunaitponi to emerge from the interview, was that concerning the yet to be invented helicopter. Unknown to him, some attempts at vertical take-off had already been made, yet the first successful helicopter was not to be built until 1930.[25] Nevertheless, in 1914, David Ngunaitponi is reported as saying:

> An aeroplane can be manufactured that will rise straight into the air from the ground by the application of the boomerang principle. .... The boomerang is shaped to rise in the air according to the velocity with which it is propelled, and so can an aeroplane. This class of flying machine can be carried on board ship, the immense advantages of which are obvious.[26]

History has proven him right, for today's helicopters are built upon precisely that principle which was pioneered some thousands of years ago by the Aboriginal genius who first developed the uniquely Australian returning boomerang. David Ngunaitponi stated that his main concern was to ensure that his nine year old son could gain a good enough education to enable him to live independently of both mission and Government, and possibly to become a politician when he grew up. And then, after he had given a brief organ recital, the interview ended.

It might have been expected that such revelations, predictions and demonstrations would have shaken the racial misconceptions of the reporter, and some of his readers, to the roots. However, such was not the case: in fact they were confirmed. For the article is prefaced by an interview with Dr Herbert Basedow, in which the doctor 'explains' the phenomenon of Ngunaitponi so plausibly that the currently held racial theories were not upset, but on the contrary, were supported. Amongst other points, Basedow claimed that:

> Modern science and study has made the brain of the white man longer in its frontal lobes than that of the Aboriginal, and it has more convolutions than the primitive brain. All the natural instincts are present in the Aboriginal brain, however, and you will find that a native will rise to the occasion every time. You have an example before you in Unaipon.[27]

The reporter was duly impressed by the apparent logic of this statement, and said:

> I agreed. Unaipon was a living example of the facts adduced by the doctor; a wonderful example of the degree of perfection to which the Aboriginal brain could attain.[28]

Needless to say, the doctor was quite incorrect in his authoritative

assertions, and modern empirical evidence reveals, in fact, that the average Aboriginal skull is longer than the average European skull,[29] but that cranial capacity and the brain itself do not differ from those of other human beings.[30] This is, of course, only what one would expect, but it is indicative of the kind of viciously destructive prejudices that Aborigines have had to endure, that it has been necessary to prove that they are 'normal'. When a scientist like Basedow, who was both a recognized expert on the Aborigines, and a strong and vociferous protagonist on behalf of their race, was making statements such as these, it can scarcely be wondered at that the general populace, which had no scientific training and no close contact with Aborigines, should assume that they were correct.

In justice to Dr Basedow it should be pointed out that much of what he said really was correct, and much of what he wrote and did was of considerable benefit to the Aborigines. His best known book, for instance, — Knights of the Boomerang — is a recognition of the nobility of the tribal Aborigines who still inhabited the north of the continent at this time. And several years of his life were spent as an itinerating medical officer working among Aborigines in the Northern Territory. He was one of the first people to publicise the fact that Aborigines had been in possession of Australia for many thousands of years: most people were still under the impression that they had arrived not long before the Europeans. He also pointed out that Aborigines and Europeans were next of kin — much closer to each other than any other races, and in fact descended from the one common stock. Yet he laboured under this one massive fallacy that did so much to undermine the rest of his good

work: he was convinced that the Aborigines were a child-race, separated from the rest of mankind by eons of evolutionary development; that they had remained stationary for tens of centuries while the main branches of man had advanced, and that there was little they could do now to catch up. Typical of Basedow's statements was a lecture he delivered to the Field Naturalists section of the Royal Society in July 1914. Amongst his other sensible and constructive points, Basedow argued that the Aborigines had been in Australia since at least the Pliocene age, and adduced the fact that carvings of diprotodon tracks had been found in northern South Australia; and that dingo bones had been found beneath volcanic flows at Mount Gambier.[31] But the eminent scientist then went on to argue that whereas European man developed since that time, Australian man remained 'hermetically sealed', and he further concluded that:

> It is on this account that the original inhabitant of our great southern land has remained "primitive" in every sense of the word — mentally, morally and physically. He is the most primitive of all living races of man. We have indeed the living equivalent of the fossil man of Europe.[32]

Basedow then wound up his lecture with a plea which epitomized the attitude of many well-intentioned Europeans of the time.

> The Australian Aboriginal is anatomically and psychologically our next of kin, nearer by far than the negroid or mongoloid. Spare the Aboriginal therefore and care for him. The only difference between you and him is that in the evolution of our boasted species he is but a helpless child, and you are all the exalted glorification of mature and adult man.[33]

It is not known what Basedow's friend, David Ngunaitponi, thought of this, or whether in fact the relationship between the two could really be described as friendship, when one considered the other to be a clever, forty-two-year-old child. By coincidence it

was only four days prior to Basedow's well-reported Adelaide lecture, that David Ngunaitponi himself gave a lecture to the Royal Geographical Society in Melbourne, where he had now taken up residence. It was a lecture which evinced sound thinking and good sense. In discussing the tragic destruction of the Ngarrindjeri nation, and their reduction in numbers to the point where only about three hundred remained (and of these a mere thirty were of that full descent), David Ngunaitponi assured his audience that the missionaries were not to blame: in fact, if anything, they had arrived just too late to save the people from the evil effects of the European settlement. Contrary to what most people took to be an established fact, the Ngarrindjeri lecturer asserted that the race was not doomed, and claimed that:

> If the remnant of the tribe had been allowed either to live in the primitive state or had adopted European methods thoroughly, it would have increased instead of decreasing. .... I do not believe that because Aborigines become civilized and live in houses they will die rapidly. It was the chopping and changing about that reduced the numbers. .... Half measures are fatal to the full-blooded native.[34]

The A.F.A. and the Ngarrindjeri did not have enough land now to allow those people who wished to do so, to carry on living the traditional way; and neither did they have the finance which would have enabled them to establish viable European-type industries at Raukkan. But David Ngunaitponi's point was a valid and crucial one nevertheless, and he expanded and reiterated it. Fifty years later, Government Departments of Aboriginal Affairs throughout the continent were still obsessed with the idea of a 'transition' or 'training' stage, in which the people lived in neither one world nor the other, but in a kind of social, physical and cultural limbo. The physical manifes-

tation was the transition house, of which many were erected in David Ngunaitponi's own State. The utter stupidity of the notion that Aborigines (or anyone else) could be 'trained' to live in normal suburban homes, by first of all living in unsewered, unlined, one-roomed galvanized iron huts, is surprising even to one hardened to such inanities. Yet in 1963, Charles Duguid was still attempting to dissuade the authorities from proceeding with such insulting and useless schemes. In that year he wrote:

> My experience, even with those who were tribal only a few years back, is that they do appreciate good housing, and the better the housing the more they rise to it. .... Houses without bathroom, laundry and sanitary facilities are better not built at all.[35]

This contention has been proven to be correct many times, and it is only to be expected that when Aborigines who have been used to the best type of Aboriginal dwelling, decide to occupy a European-type dwelling, they should want the best type available — not an insanitary cow shed. Housing was only one facet of this whole destructive approach to Aboriginal 'advancement', and it was only a part of the point that David Ngunaitponi was making — but it was a vital part. He went on to say:

> [I] would sooner live in a house and read books than lie in a wurlie in the lap of wild nature. .... I would sooner be working in an engineering shop in the city than living in the bush. I would not care if I never saw the bush from one month's end to the other.[36]

In advocating that Aboriginal lads should be apprenticed in the cities, David Ngunaitponi stated that: 'Environment [is] greater than heredity; and a different environment would produce a different man.'[37] And once again, this outstanding scholar and advocate, seems to have antedated the general thinking on this subject by about half a cen-

tury.

He returned from Melbourne at the end of 1914 in his normal impecunious state, despite the financial assistance of some new-found Melbourne friends.[38]

The chronic racism which David Ngunaitponi was attempting to combat on behalf of his people, had, by this time, corroded deep into the soul of Australian society. Apparently no sector was untouched — including the A.F.A.. Some members — like Redman — stood rock-firm in adhering to what they knew to be the truth: others seemingly closed their eyes and minds to the evidence already before them, and went along with the current mendacities which posed as science. For instance, in 1903, Rev Henry Howard, in moving the adoption of the Annual Report, is reported as saying, inter alia, that:

> ...the mere strain of a highly organized social system was too great for the Aborigines. They [are] too low down in the scale of evolution to be able to keep step with the strides of civilization. .... There was the hidden curse of a half-caste population, which had the vices of black and white...and while it might be said that the Aborigines were a fast decaying race, [I do] not know whether after all it would not be better that they should die out cleanly than rot out, as they [are] doing in the Northern Territory.[39]

The motion was seconded by Mr John Sumner who had travelled from Raukkan for the Annual General Meeting: he was one of those cursed people who, though a loyal and upright member of the Raukkan Church since its inception, and one of its oldest deacons, had apparently inherited all the vices of both black and white. John Sumner spoke at some length at this meeting, and amongst other things, he completely demolished the 'missing link' theory — certainly as far as it pertained to Aborigines — by recounting an anecdote from his

younger days. He described how he had been accosted by a grinkari on the banks of the Murray many years previously, and he recalled their conversation as follows:

> The white gentleman said — "Do you know what question I am going to ask you young fellow?" I said "No." He said — "You are descended from a baboon monkey. I saw it in a book." I said — "You get a monkey and put alongside me, and ask us a question in your language, and if the monkey can answer you the same as I do, then I am descended from a monkey. Then you sit down alongside the monkey, and I will ask you a question in my language, and if you cannot answer it any more than the monkey, you are descended from the monkey."[40]

John Sumner's speech was warmly appreciated by the audience, and was, in many ways, a refutation of much of what Howard had previously said.

Mercifully, there were few A.F.A. members who were as insensitive as Howard, but nevertheless, some of his views seem to have been shared by a large proportion of the very people who should have evinced most compassion for their fellow human beings. The growing number of part-Eruopeans at Raukkan was indeed proving an embarrassment to the Committee, as the popular misconceptions became cliches. It was now accepted as fact that 'half-castes' inherited the 'cunning of the blacks' and the 'vices of the whites', and some A.F.A. members seemed to believe that one of the Mission's great achievements had been to teach them 'to fight against their inherited vices.'[41] Thomas Fleming put the situation succinctly, if none too nicely, when he said in his 1912 Annual Report:

> The white man has invaded their hearths and homes, leaving behind him a serious half-caste problem, who are to be pitied and sympathized equally with the full-blooded Natives. Their taint of colour excludes them from the privileges of the white race, who, though responsible for their existence, object to funds intended for Aborigines being devoted to half-castes.[42]

THE FINAL YEARS OF A.F.A. CONTROL (1911-1915).

The noun 'taint' is the most pregnant word in this passage: it tells a great deal about the situation of the part-Europeans at Raukkan, and about the attitude of the people working hardest on their behalf.

Staff Problems

These last few years of A.F.A. control were not particularly happy ones for either the Committee or the Ngarrindjeri. The departure of Ambrose Redman at the beginning of 1912 signalled a new period of unrest and friction at Raukkan. Redman's able assistant, H.E. Read, had resigned just before Redman, and since no-one could be found who was capable of overseeing the whole operation of the station as Redman had done, the old position of farm overseer was reintroduced. The new superintendent, David Roper, and the new farm overseer, W.L. Williams, (who had held the post and been sacked on a previous occasion) were at loggerheads within the first two months.[43] C.E. Taplin (vice president) and W.E. Dalton (hon secretary) were deputed by the Committee to investigate the position in October 1912. On the twelfth of that month, Dalton recorded in the Visitors Book:

> Mr. C.E. Taplin and W.E. Dalton visited the station to enquire into the general working. They regret to find that there is considerable friction between the Officers which detrimentally effects the welfare of the Mission.[44]

The Committee decided that these two gentlemen should pay monthly visits to Raukkan to enable it to maintain a firmer control on the station.[45] And on the day of their visit the following month (November), Dalton wrote:

> The relationship between the Officers still much strained. Arranged that the Superintendent Missionary and the Farm

THE FINAL YEARS OF A.F.A. CONTROL (1911-1915).

> Manager should have independent control of their respective departments and report direct to the Committee.[46]

Such a system of divided rule had no chance of succeeding, and as a result, in December of that year (1912), the Committee decided to sack Williams a second time.[47]

In the meantime a significant development had taken place on the Committee. A Baptist minister — John Henry Sexton — had been appointed to the Committee and had managed to have himself proclaimed the 'Missionary Secretary'. He thus became joint secretary with Dalton, who was nearing the end of his life, and who, in any case, was an accountant, not a clergyman.[48] Sexton had a penchant for organizing things — particularly other people — and one of the first duties he performed was the preparation of the new Regulations 'for the guidance of officers of the Mission', which were adopted on 12 March 1912.[49] The major difference between the new and the old regulations was that the superintendent's powers were reduced: which, in turn, meant that J.H. Sexton's powers were increased. The new regulations established a local committee at Raukkan, consisting of all the officers, including the Head Teacher (who was not by this time an A.F.A. employee) but which had no Ngarrindjeri representatives at all. The superintendent, ex officio, was chairman of this local board, but such a position is very different from that of manager with absolute authority. The superintendent had to report monthly to the Missionary Secretary. This trend towards concentrating power in the hands of a clerical officer in Adelaide, was to continue throughout the thirty years of Sexton's secretaryship, and was to develop into a classic case of the dog being wagged by its tail.

THE FINAL YEARS OF A.F.A. CONTROL (1911-1915).

From the point of view of the Ngarrindjeri, the shift in emphasis was of serious significance, for Sexton, throughout all his years, never seemed to understand them, made no attempt to study their culture, and did not even get to know any of them as people; with the possible exception of David Ngunaitponi, whom he was able to use for his own purposes, by developing a financial hold over him. Sexton began to gain virtual control of the A.F.A. after Dalton died in June 1913, when he became the general secretary.[50]

Probably David Roper was not a particularly strong superintendent in any case, but his task was made much harder by the manoeuvres in Adelaide, and, of course, by the very unsettled and difficult nature of this period. At any time, it was thought that the South Australian Government could take over the Mission, but the possibility of a Federal take-over of all Aboriginal affairs was also being widely discussed in the states with sizeable Aboriginal populations. Most importantly, however, Roper's task was made difficult by the growing unhappiness of a people despised, rejected and pauperized by the grinkari majority, and crowded in upon each other under unsatisfactory conditions. His troubles with the people began soon after he took up his position. In July 1912 he tried to have evangelical meetings banned, because during these sessions, Dan Wilson — an upright and dedicated Christian — criticised the behaviour of the grinkari officers:[51] and in the following month Roper was physically assaulted.[52] In April 1914, Roper complained to the Committee that insubordination was rife, and he appealed for greater powers for the officers,[53] while Burnside, the farm overseer, put forward the logical opinion that much of the strife at Raukkan

was caused by the gross unemployment due to lack of funds.[54] However, neither Roper nor Burnside were destined to be troubled much longer by the state of affairs at Raukkan. At the May meeting of the Committee, it was decided that Roper's services should be dispensed with, and that the Government should be asked to appoint a successor for him, so that when it eventually took over the Mission, the new superintendent could continue in office.[55] The responsible minister (the Commissioner of Public Works) concurred with this scheme, and J.B. Steer, the farm overseer at Point Pearce, was found to be a mutually acceptable appointee to both the Government and the Association.[56] Steer agreed to undertake the job, and he commenced his duties in December 1914: and he thus served the A.F.A. in its final year of control at Raukkan.[57] In September 1914, the Committee decided to replace the farm overseer with a missionary, since Steer would be responsible for all industrial operations when he took over. Thus, Burnside was given a month's notice,[58] and H.E. Read, who had served under Redman, was appointed in charge of religious affairs at Raukkan.[59]

Village Inadequacies

Not surprisingly, these troubled years saw little real progress of any kind at Raukkan. Urgent needs were recognized and noted, but little could be done about them due to lack of finance. There was, for instance, a real need for a hall at Raukkan, since the church was not suited to secular gatherings;[60] and the partly demolished jetty was still in a highly dangerous state: but there were more pressing needs than these. Even by 1915 there was not

one bathroom on the place, although the good water supply available by then would have enabled water to be reticulated to the cottages and dormitories.[61] And the sanitary accommodation of the entire village was described as 'painfully lacking in completeness'.[62] In 1911, the School Inspector wrote:

> A "urinal" for boys is urgently needed. "Out-office" accommodation should also be provided — the W.C.'s at cottages are too distant.[63]

The same kind of observation appeared year after year, and in 1919, the inspector was still observing that a urinal and pit were absolutely necessary in the boys' 'out-office'.[64] It is little wonder that there were chronic health problems under these circumstances.

Two Successes

In 1912, some of the Ngarrindjeri farmers found themselves to be in severe difficulties, as a poor season upset the already precarious balance of their farm economies. Coorong farmers were particularly badly hit by the shortage of stock fodder.[65] The Committee allowed Alfred Cameron, Henry Lampard and Michael Gollan to run their cattle and horses on Raukkan, and in doing so they enabled these men to keep going.[66] The Needles would have provided an excellent solution to the problem had it been let to these battlers, and in August of that year (1912), it was available for reletting. The Commissioner of Public Works advised that The Needles ought to be occupied by Ngarrindjeri farmers, but the Committee rejected the advice, and sub-let it once again to a European for twelve months.[67] Henry Lampard and Alfred Cameron still had their stock on Raukkan's new block (Wirrilda) the following year, but were ordered to remove them by May.[68]

THE FINAL YEARS OF A.F.A. CONTROL (1911-1915).

In June of 1913, Matthew Kropinyeri wrote to the Association on behalf of several Ngarrindjeri farmers (including his son Nathan), asking that they be allowed to lease the Coorong and Needles properties: but the A.F.A. stuck to its policy of placing financial considerations first, and Bowman and Mason continued to sub-lease the two blocks.[69] As compensation, Lampard and Cameron were to be allowed to continue grazing their stock on Wirrilda — at 6 pence per head per week![70] In February 1914, Alfred Cameron went to Adelaide to protest about the fact that the overseer had ordered him to get his cattle off Raukkan. It was a very worthwhile trip, because the Committee decided that he and Henry Lampard should be given the right to occupy The Needles, since Mason no longer wished to use it.[71] Cameron was allotted the house, and his family have occupied it ever since.

The realization of Alfred Cameron's long-standing dream is one of the very few Ngarrindjeri success stories of this period. Another one which should be mentioned is the case of George Rankine, who was one of the young Ngarrindjeri journeyman bootmakers who set out from Raukkan to find their own way in the world. George Rankine had become a member of the Church of Christ before leaving for Adelaide at the beginning of the present century, and appears to have been befriended by some of his co-religionists in the city.[72] Among his other achievements was the winning of the heart and hand of Eva Mugg, the European daughter of the man who taught him his trade at Raukkan.[73] And in 1914, with the financial assistance of some friends (and £10 from the A.F.A.) he set up his own boot shop at 52 Jetty Road, Glenelg.[74] The venture was a success, and it was

in the house attached to the shop that George and Eva Rankine brought up their family and lived happily for many years. The avhievements of people like Alfred Cameron and George Rankine are unspectacular, and may seem of little consequence — unless cognizance is taken of the enormous odds against them; unless it is remembered that normal sources of finance were closed to them; and unless it is realized that the grinkari world in which they were succeeding considered them to be the equivalent of the fossil men of Europe.

Finance

Financially, the period witnessed a further rapid decline, as the Association's difficulties increased. The Government subsidy remained at £1,000 per annum — just as it was in George Taplin's final years, yet the drains on resources were very much greater. There was no woolwashing industry and no Smith of Dunesk grant to boost the coffers; and no game and few fish to supplement the diet of the population, which was now over twice as large as it was when Taplin died. In 1912, the Association's debt reached a record high of £1,344-10-10,[75] and was the reason behind yet another A.F.A. deputation to see the Commissioner of Public Works to seek Government assistance. By this time, John Verran had been defeated at the polls, and Archibald Peake was premier for a second time, with Richard Butler the Commissioner of Public Works and minister responsible for the Aborigines. At least three politicians — William Angus, John Lewis and John Duncan — accompanied the deputation when it waited on Butler on 22 May 1912.[76] Angus introduced the deputation (which the Advertiser described as 'impressive') and spoke

strongly in support of the A.F.A.'s work at Raukkan.[77] Both Duncan and Lewis also pleaded the cause of the Association and the Aborigines. It is indicative of the mood of the day that Lewis, who was a member of the A.F.A. Committee, also took the opportunity to attack one of John Verran's statements of the previous year, and in doing so he betrayed an appalling attitude toward the Aborigines. Verran, who was then premier, had said:

> It is incumbent on the Government to supply the needs of the Aborigines within the State and to give them a complete education.[78]

In reply to which, Lewis told Butler and the deputation that:

> He did not know that they wanted more education. They wanted plenty to eat and drink and some clothes. That was all a nigger wanted in South Australia.[79]

It is scarcely the kind of statement that one would expect to hear from a friend of the Aborigines. However, in the racist climate of this century's second decade, the remark was apparently not deemed to be exceptionable. Butler promised help for the Association, and was as good as his word, for the Government paid off the A.F.A.'s deficit, and in so doing, allowed it to begin the new financial year free from debt.[80]

However, by October of that year (1912), the Association could see itself again getting into difficulty, and accordingly, a further deputation was sent to the Commissioner of Public Works, this time requesting:

> ...that a Board be appointed by the Government to take over the control of the Aborigines of the State including the control of the Mission Stations, subject to provision for the purely Missionary aims of the Association.[81]

In answer to this request, the Government decided to conduct a Royal

Commission of inquiry into the whole state of Aboriginal affairs throughout the State.[82] The Ngarrindjeri were thus primarily responsible for bringing about both of the two major enquiries into South Australian Aborigines — the 1860 Legislative Council Enquiry, and the 1913-16 Royal Commission.[83]

The 1913 Royal Commission

Like its precursor half a century before, the 1913 Royal Commission is of great interest to the scholar because of the wealth of information contained in the Minutes of Evidence. Besides taking evidence in Adelaide, the Commissioners visited every mission station in the State, and also went to Queensland and New South Wales to gain information and opinion from officials, politicians and others connected with Aboriginal affairs. In all, 3,682 questions were put and answered, and each question and statement was taken down verbatim. It is instructive to compare the 1913 Royal Commission with the 1860 Inquiry, since they both accurately reflect the current attitudes of Europeans towards Aborigines at the time, as well as giving a clear picture of the over-all situation regarding Aborigines. The earlier inquiry was much narrower, being chiefly (though not solely) concerned with the Ngarrindjeri; while the Royal Commission, though certainly precipitated by the Ngarrindjeri, was also concerned with the people on missions such as Koonibba and Point Pearce which had been established after 1860. On the whole, both the enquirers and the witnesses at the 1860 investigation were of a more cultured and humane disposition than those of 1913, who tended to be more dogmatic, less articulate, and more racist in

their questions and answers. There is, despite this, a surprising similarity in the questions that were asked: clearly indicating that the Commissioners had not bothered to read the earlier report (or much else that related to Aborigines), and that politicians and Europeans generally had learnt little, if anything, about Aborigines during the intervening half-century. The most significant difference between the two enquiries, is that whereas in 1860, the Select Committee interviewed three West Coast Aborigines who happened to be in Adelaide at the time, and who were apprehensive and uncommunicative; the Royal Commissioners, in contrast, heard evidence from a number of Aborigines — particularly the Ngarrindjeri — who spoke forcefully and eloquently in pleading for equitable opportunities and justice for their people.

The two Labour members of the Royal Commission were James Jelley and the ex-premier, John Verran; while the Government was represented by George Ritchie, John Lewis and William Angus (who was appointed chairman). It could have been expected that Angus, who was connected with the A.F.A., and Lewis, who was on the A.F.A. Committee, might have evinced a more enlightened attitude than the other members, but such was not the case: they all demonstrated a marked inability to rise above the baneful prejudices of the day, or to question their preconceived ideas in the light of the empirical evidence which they had before them.

Even after interviewing people like Matthew Kropinyeri and David Ngunaitponi, both of whom used the English language as well or better than any of the Commissioners, John Verran was still able to ask such questions as: 'Do you find the half-castes more treacher-

ous than the full-bloods?'[84] 'Do you think you can make anything but a blackfellow out of a blackfellow?'[85] and on another occasion he asked the Head Teacher at Koonibba: 'Of course, you are not aiming at removing the native instinct from them?'[86] Perhaps the question which demonstrates most clearly just how much the Commissioners were really concerned about the welfare and survival of the Aborigines, was asked by James Jelley. Professor E.C. Stirling of Adelaide University had pointed out that much of the illness and the high death rate amongst Aborigines was caused by inadequate housing; and he suggested ways by which the situation could have been ameliorated. Immediately Jelley saw a possible danger, and asked:

> If the natives are given the conditions you speak of, is there any likelihood of increasing in numbers, so as to become a very great burden on the State?[87]

No doubt the Commissioners were most relieved to hear Stirling assure them that no matter what they did, the Aborigines could not survive beyond a certain time.[88]

One of the chief concerns of the Commissioners was with the health of the Aborigines, and particularly with Venereal Disease: not as one might have hoped, because they were moved by compassion for the suffering of fellow human beings, but because they were concerned about diseases being transmitted to Europeans. The injustice of this approach, bearing in mind that Venereal Disease (like most diseases from which Aborigines suffer) was introduced by Europeans, seems not to have occurred to them. The attitude both to sick Aborigines and to Venereal Disease (over which Aborigines seem to have been given a proprietary right) is demonstrated lucidly in an exchange between the chairman and T.W. Fleming of the A.F.A..

Angus: Have you looked into the matter of the attitude many hospitals are forced to adopt towards the Aboriginal patient: they dislike having them?
Fleming: That is the colour question again.
Angus: And the natives' disease?
Fleming: They are not worse in that respect than the white man.
Angus: They are thought worse?
Fleming: I do not think they are, but you know that these poor fellows when they go to the hospitals, are not always received with the same kindness as a white man.[89]

Provision had been made in the 1911 Aborigines Act for the construction of Lock Hospitals, and for the incarceration therein of sick Aborigines, as was being done at the time in Western Australia. And the Commissioners spent time exploring the practicability of establishing such an institution — possibly on Wardang Island. No great expense was envisaged — just a collection of galvanized iron sheds, where the diseased Aborigines from all over the State could be locked away, and constitute no threat to the health of the European community. This scheme enjoyed considerable support in South Australia, but when the Commissioners went to Queensland in July 1913 they were given a lesson in humanity by Dr J.E. Dods, the Government Medical Officer. Dods disapproved strongly of a Lock Hospital or any special hospital for Aborigines, and took the attitude that Aborigines suffering from a disease or ailment should be treated the same as anyone else. He made his position regarding Venereal Disease quite plain, when he stated:

> If a person is ill and requires hospital treatment, I think we should not bother about what is the cause of the illness. .... I do not think you will ever eradicate venereal disease, but it is certainly desirable that every effort should be made to treat patients suffering from it.[90]

In the event, it was decided not to proceed with the scheme in South Australia because there were not enough cases to warrant setting up

such an institution.[91] It is interesting to compare the great concern which the Commissioners had for contagious diseases deemed to be hazardous to Europeans, with the almost total lack of regard they displayed for the real problems of Aboriginal health. They seemed to take no interest at all when Patrick Francis pointed out to them that twenty four children had died at Raukkan in the space of only five years.[92] And there is no mention anywhere in their two reports, that cognizance was taken of Professor Stirling's recommendations regarding proper food and housing. Stirling had pointed out that the two major killers were a totally inadequate diet, and chronic overcrowding in unhygienic houses. Speaking of Raukkan he said:

> ...one thing that struck me when I was there was the mischief of putting all those natives into practically closed rooms. There you had the conditions for the development of tuberculosis and other lung troubles.[93]

The Commissioners must have found their trip to Queensland something of a revelation. Besides talking to Dr Dods, they also interviewed the Minister responsible for Aborigines, the Chief Protector, the Deputy Chief Protector and some other officials. The Minister (J.G. Appel) told them, amongst other things, that in Queensland the Aboriginal children competed successfully with the Europeans; that Aborigines made most successful farmers and home-owners (at such places as Mapoon); and that they would be capable of running the stations themselves if given the opportunity.[94] In answer to Jelley's inevitable question about the 'nomadic instinct', Appel patiently explained that: 'The Aborigines are born on the place and live there all their lives. They are employed all the time.'[95] He refrained from making the obvious comparison with European bushmen, who really

were nomadic. The minister also surprised the Commissioners with the information that the Aborigines were not dying out, and furthermore, he said:

> The natives will not die out if they are cared for and receive good treatment. .... It is simply a question of treatment and protecting them from the worst diseases of the European.[96]

In an era when the alleged inferiority of the Aborigines was taken for granted, and their imminent extinction was considered to be ineluctable, such views must have appeared quite radical. The Commissioners also learned that on Queensland Settlements the Aborigines were provided with a plentiful and constant supply of beef, and that the Government considered all beef grown on these stations to be the property of the Aborigines.[97] What a contrast this was with the situation in South Australia, where Government parsimony did not allow any meat at all to be included in the rations. As W.G. South, the South Australian Protector, pointed out, in the Commissioners' own State, the Government's bounty still consisted of: 'flour, tea, sugar, a little tobacco, and ocasionally for the sick, sago and rice.'[98] All of which, he added, was of the lowest quality available. (And he could have added that the quantity was niggardly and insufficient.) It should not be inferred from the foregoing that Queensland, at that time, was a paradise for Aborigines. The fact is, that the Aborigines who were then enjoying better treatment than their South Australian counterparts, were the survivors of the recently concluded 'war of extermination', in which a sizeable proportion of the Queensland population was slaughtered by squads of mass-murderers, especially trained for the job.[99] The strongly protectionist approach then operating in Queensland, was largely a reaction

against this attempted genocide.

One of the problems with which the Commissioners attempted to grapple, concerned racial traits, and concomitantly, miscegenation. Like several other matters, it was a topic on which the so-called experts tendered such divergent views (some of them being diametrically opposed), that the Commissioners were probably even more confused on this point when the enquiry was completed than when it commenced. Perhaps the finest example of a white-supremacist sentiment was offered by Chief Protector South, who said categorically: 'The half-caste is a better man than the blackfellow. I think it would be a disgrace if he were not.'[100] However, a number of witnesses (including South's counterpart in New South Wales) strongly disagreed with this contention. J.B. Steer, who was soon to become superintendent at Raukkan, showed how well suited he was to the job by restating the popular belief: 'I think they have practically the vice of the white man and the cunning of the black.'[101] But J.G. Appel, the Queensland Minister, was able to see the situation from an entirely different view point. It was his observation that unions of European and Aboriginal parents produced progeny who were actually superior — not to the Aborigines, but to the Europeans![102]

From all of this conflicting evidence, most of which consisted of unsubstantiated opinion, the Commissioners attempted to reach some conclusions regarding the 'problem' of the growing numbers of part Europeans. The suggestions which they eventually put forward, showed clearly that they had failed to understand the issues involved, and had not even grasped the fact that they were dealing with human

beings. They suggested, inter alia, that the 'half-caste' Aborigines should be separated from the 'full-bloods'.[103] This was to allow the latter to die out quickly and peacefully, and preferably without producing any more 'half-castes'. The 'half-castes', in turn, would be pushed out into the general community, and absorbed as quickly as possible into the white race: thus, eventually, leaving no trace of the Aborigines, and no more problems regarding them. Such a plan was not only simplistic: it was also contemptuous of basic human rights. Parents would be separated from children; while brothers, sisters, friends and relatives, would all have been divided in this way. Fortunately, like most of the recommendations of the Commissioners, this attack on civil rights and liberties was never implemented.

Another suggestion was that part European children should be separated from their parents and fostered out, or brought up in institutions.[104] This scheme had originally been proposed for Aboriginal children in Governor Grey's time, and was designed to facilitate assimilation. Many witnesses were in favour of the proposal, but the age at which the children should be taken away was the cause of some controversy. Professor Stirling and Archdeacon Bussell thought that all part European children should be taken from their mothers during their pre-school years, while W.E. Dalton thought that the separation should not take place until the children had left school.[105] But James Grey, the Secretary of the State Children's Council, was the most enthusiastic abductor. He told the Commissioners that:

> They should be taken away directly they are born. If they are in the wurlie a week it is bad for them, but it is fatal for them to remain there a year.[106]

THE FINAL YEARS OF A.F.A. CONTROL (1911-1915).

Since, by now, the majority of the Ngarrindjeri were of part European descent, such a policy, if implemented, would have meant that most married couples at Raukkan would have lost all their children — either at birth, at three years, or on leaving school — whichever scheme was decided upon.

For a sensible and civilized comment on this matter it is necessary, as is so often the case, to turn to one of the Aboriginal witnesses. Matthew Kropinyeri stated:

> In regard to the taking of our children in hand by the State to learn trades &c., our people would gladly embrace the opportunity of betterment for our children but to be subjected to complete alienation from our children is, to say the least, an unequalled act of injustice, and no parent worthy of the name would either yield to or urge such a measure.[107]

In the event, the Commissioners ignored this excellent advice, and recommended that provision be made for the Government to take the children away at the age of ten. Once again, however, the recommendation was not acted upon, although there was already provision in the 1911 Aborigines Act enabling such a course to be adopted.

From the Ngarrindjeri point of view, the two most crucial questions for the Commissioners to enquire into, were the perennial problems of unemployment and shortage of land. Aborigines were not interested in Lock Hospitals or whether unintelligent grinkaris thought 'half-castes' were better than 'full-bloods'; and they were certainly not interested in having their children forcibly taken from them. But what they were interested in, was gaining better employment opportunities, being given the chance to acquire land, and receiving the social justice that it was their right to expect. Before the Commissioners travelled to Raukkan in March 1913, they

called as witnesses the joint secretaries of the A.F.A. — Dalton and Sexton. And on their return from the station they interviewed Fleming, (the president) Bussell (the vice president) and C.E. Taplin, who was also on the Committee. On the whole, the A.F.A. officials gave the Ngarrindjeri full support in their claims for land and for employment opportunities, but they nevertheless also showed how deeply racial prejudice had permeated their own ranks by this time. A good example of this latter point was given by Dalton, when he said:

> ...sixty years ago the natives were practically animals crawling about in the bush. The half-castes are their children, and usually, also the children of the most depraved class of white men. ...their children have not the stamina and the proper conception of right and wrong that other children have.[108]

The statement is so ridiculous that it does not warrant refutation: but if Dalton really believed this, it is difficult to see how he could have thrown a great deal of enthusiasm into his work. Archdeacon Bussell also betrayed his true feelings, when he pointed out to the Commissioners how much prejudice the Ngarrindjeri had to contend with, even in the shearing trade:

> You have only to go on the lake runs in September and October and you see white shearers and half-caste blacks. They have separate sides of the shed and separate places to live in. While it is all very sad, at the same time I feel I cannot altogether blame the white men for having a feeling against associating closely with coloured labour.[109]

What was the cause of the feeling, and why Bussell sympathized with it, nobody bothered to ask, so it would appear that the Commissioners took racial prejudice for granted, and were also in accord with it. The prejudice, it should be noted, was not all on one side. Two Ngarrindjeri men who were shearing at that time — Mr. Tom Bonney

and Mr Edgar Lampard — have told me that this unique Lakes district arrangement was quite satisfactory from their point of view; and Mr Lampard said that they had little desire to associate with grinkaris in any case.[110]

Ngarrindjeri shearers were generally considered to be the best in South Australia — not for breaking speed records, but for overall workmanship — and for this reason they were in demand by the squatters during the shearing season.[111] However, so much pressure was being brought to bear by grinkari workers, that even this trade — their most reliable source of employment for two generations — was being denied them. As Sexton explained to the Commissioners, the shearing sheds by 1913, were 'very largely closed against them'.[112] Regarding alternative rural employment Sexton said:

> The half-caste, in course of time, must either settle on the land or come out and compete with other labouring men. But there you have a distinct difficulty. We have men who go out from Pt. McLeay, but they are regarded as inferior labourers, and they get smaller wages. Then, possibly, you have an outcry against that state of things. They are driven back to the station and there is nothing for them to do. .... Some of the natives are working away from the station, some are lumping wheat, and they do work equal to that of white men. But those cases are exceptions. .... They really are in a most pitiable condition, and young men have spoken to me again and again if something could not be done so that they could obtain remunerative employment instead of depending on charity.[113]

The near hopelessness of the Ngarrindjeri predicament is further attested to by F.G. Ayers, a farmer who had acquired one of the Narrung Station blocks (and who was a signatory to the Narrung petition, shown in Appendix V). Ayers told the Commissioners:

> ...a settler would, all things being equal, give the preference to the white man in the matter of work and taking the

> employee into his own house. That being so, if you send the half-caste out to earn his living, he must accept lower wages than white men.[114]

The A.F.A. president pointed out that the Ngarrindjeri met the same type of difficulty in the city. He told the Commissioners:

> ...the objection to colour is so very strong that I do not think it will ever cease to be a difficulty. We have found that when a man had to be turned off from a factory in town it was the half-caste man who had to go.[115]

It should have been quite clear to the Commissioners by this time, that it was pointless telling the Ngarrindjeri to get off the Mission and go out and find jobs — because there were simply none available for them. There thus seemed to be only two alternatives left, if the Government really wished to help the Ngarrindjeri to help themselves: either they had to be allowed to take up land and become farmers; or else some kind of viable industry had to be established at Raukkan.

When the Commissioners visited Raukkan, they found the place in a state of considerable disorder. The farm manager had recently been dismissed, and David Roper, still relatively new to the superintendent's job, was having great difficulty coping with the whole administration, and seemed to have no control over the many discontented unemployed men who were to be seen throughout the village. The Commissioners were singularly unimpressed with Roper, and Angus's subsequent report to the A.F.A., was instrumental in bringing about his dismissal.[116] However, the Ngarrindjeri who were interviewed left no doubt as to what was really wrong, and what was really needed. Time and again their spokesmen expressed the revulsion of the people who were forced to subsist on charity, and they

pleaded for the opportunity to be able to do away with it altogether. David Ngunaitponi told them:

> Twenty years ago it was easier for us to live. There was more work to be got. We used to work then and were paid for it, and lived as the result of our labour. Things have changed in that work is not now available.[117]

Dan Wilson supported this, saying in part:

> The only dissatisfaction here is that we have no work to do. We are simply knocking about the place. When work is to be got outside I go to it.[118]

And Henry Lampard helped to explain why circumstances had changed so radically, when he told the Commissioners:

> In the early days when I went to work the settlers treated me as a man. All the work the settlers give us now is a little bit in the harvesting time. The farmer must keep the work for his own sons and daughters.[119]

All of the Ngarrindjeri saw that the only satisfactory answer lay in allowing them to become independent farmers, and the general consensus of opinion was that about twenty men living at Raukkan at that time, already had enough experience to enable them to take over and run farms successfully, if given the opportunity. They were supported in this contention by George Hackett, a European who had been for many years the manager of Narrung Station, but who was at this stage a farmer. Hackett arrived in the district in 1867, and he had long been a supporter of the Ngarrindjeri, and was to continue fighting on their behalf until he died. Angus asked him if the proposed Ngarrindjeri farmers would not need to be trained, and Hackett replied:

> They have all the training necessary. They can fallow and shear, and drive horses and bullocks, and do all the work that an ordinary white man can do.[120]

It should be mentioned as a peripheral, but nonetheless relevant

point, that there is a clear distinction between the attitude demonstrated by the new grinkari farmers, and that of the men of the old pastoral era, such as A.P. Bowman and Hackett himself. Bowman, for instance, pointed out that on his station, the Ngarrindjeri were paid as the Europeans, and all the men had their meals etc together.[121] Typical of the old squatter attitude was Bowman's comment on a proposal that the Mission should be moved. He said: I like the old blacks. I would give any amount to keep the old natives here.'[122] It need scarcely be said that when that loyal old friend of the Ngarrindjeri — Ambrose Redman — was interviewed in Adelaide, he supported them and their demands to the full. He asserted that the Ngarrindjeri were ready to 'step out', and he recommended buying about thirty blocks of land for them.[123] And far from them needing to be tightly supervised, Redman said it was his experience that: 'By throwing the responsibility on the native, he would work, as a rule, better than if you stood by and directed him.'[124]

If the Commissioners wanted evidence on whether the Ngarrindjeri could run farms or not, there was ample to be found — especially at East Wellington. But the two Coorong farmers who spoke to the Commissioners at Raukkan, were proof, in themselves, that some Ngarrindjeri were far above the norm as far as both ability and pertinacity were concerned. The skills needed to make a go of things on their diminutive and barren blocks of wasteland, were immensely greater than those required to run one of the fine big farms carved out of Narrung Station. Henry Lampard voiced the independent spirit and the aspirations of the Ngarrindjeri farmers when he told the Commissioners:

THE FINAL YEARS OF A.F.A. CONTROL (1911-1912).

> I have been away from the mission station for 18 or 19 years. I tried my level best because I wanted to get away from here with my boys. I have always thought that honestly earned bread is the best. I have a little piece of land — 120 acres — on the Coorong. It is fenced, and I have a house on it. We have ploughed all of it that we can. We are growing hay, and a little oats and barley. My boys are going on with the dairying. .... I am pleading for my sons. I would like them to get a piece of land.[125]

The Land Board apparently did not have to justify its decision to applicants for land, and it would appear that it had a firm policy of not granting land to anyone of Aboriginal descent, no matter how well qualified they were. Even two well educated Poonindie men — John Milera and Fred Wowinda — who had been farmers practically all their lives, were refused permission to buy a few acres of their own old farm land at Poonindie. No excuse for the discrimination was offered. As they said in their letter to the Advertiser:

> We are ignorant of the principles by which the land board is guided, but cannot help looking on our own position as hard in the extreme.[126]

During the Royal Commission, Alfred Cameron also accused the Land Board of unjust practices. He told the Commissioners:

> For the last 12 years I have been applying to the Protector for land. I tried the Land Board, and I failed there. I could always produce £100, but the board granted the land to young [white] fellows who only had £25, and to some who only had 25 shillings.[127]

How frustrating this situation must have been to the hard toiling Cameron and others like him. And yet he never gave up. Earlier he had told the Commissioners how he had battled to buy the little farm he then owned:

> I earned money to pay for it. I worked for 14 years for Mr Hackett of Narrung. .... I laboured under great difficulties in my early days here. I had to send my children 6 miles to school, and I bought a vehicle to take them. .... I have a family of 12. My farm consists of 220 acres. It

> is not large enough. One hundred acres of it are good for grazing, and the rest is scrub land. I carry stock on my land, and I do a little dairying. I have 25 cows.[128]

It was fortuitous that Alfred Cameron and Henry Lampard were at Raukkan when the Commissioners visited the station. The visit happened to coincide with that period during which both farmers were forced, by extremely poor seasons, to borrow some of the A.F.A.'s pasturage for their starving stock.

At Point Pearce, the men interviewed took a similar stand: they were capable of being farmers, and they wanted land. The position there was rather different from that at Raukkan, since the property was so large. The farm workers proposed that the 17,000 acres could be split up into twenty 500 acre farms, and still leave 7,000 acres for the village and reserve: thus the Government would not have incurred any expense at all. J.B. Steer, the farm manager, was strongly opposed to this scheme (it would have meant the end of his job, and he had not yet been appointed as superintendent at Raukkan). He told the Commissioners:

> The result would be this, that the blocks would be back in the State's hands in twelve months time, and the natives would be wandering about the State, a trouble to everyone.[129]

This seems typical of the attitude of the staff at Point Pearce at that time. The superintendent, Francis Garnett (late of Raukkan) said of the people: 'Even in five or six generations they would scarcely be equal to lower-class whites.'[130] And his wife protested against the idea of training the older girls in sewing, dress-making, cooking etc. She said:

> I think that would be putting the Government to needless expense, because there is such a demand for them as raw material. They can all wash dishes and scrub floors.[131]

THE FINAL YEARS OF A.F.A. CONTROL (1911-1915).

It appears that the Commissioners adopted the same attitude to the people at Point Pearce as did the staff, for their tone was markedly different from what it had been at Raukkan. Angus, in particular, was insufferably insolent, and in some of his questioning he sounds like an old-time school inspector trying to find out how intelligent and well-drilled the pupils are. Two examples of Angus's examination technique will demonstrate this point: 'How many acres could a team of four horses in a 15 tine drill sow in a day?'[132] and: 'What would be the interest payable on £750 at 5 per cent for one year?'[133] To their credit, the peninsula men kept their tempers when confronted with this humiliating nonsense, and argued forcefully for what they wanted — land. William Adams also raised another issue which was dear to the hearts of the people, and suggested that Point Pearce should be turned into an Industrial Training Home. He expanded on this, saying:

> We are anxious that something should be done for the rising generation. More attention should be given to the social welfare of the young people instead of devoting too much time to the commercial interests of the station. .... We feel that when our young folks leave school they should advance with civilization, and not go backward through lack of opportunity.[134]

Joe Edwards summed up the situation at Point Pearce (and incidentally at Raukkan) when he said:

> We are anxious to support ourselves. We have grown beyond the mission life, and if we remained here another 50 years we would not be any further advanced.[135]

But his plea for an opportunity for his people fell on deaf ears, and his prophecy came all too true.

The Commissioners seemed unwilling or unable to grasp the significance of the land issue. John Verran's own Aborigines Act had

taken over from the 1888 Lands Act, the provision which allowed the Government to allot blocks of land, up to 160 acres in area, to individual Aborigines. Yet Verran persistently asked witnesses why the Government would be justified in allotting land to Aborigines, when there were white men who needed land. A typical exchange is as follows:

Verran: Supposing these men were able to handle a piece of land of their own, do you think we are justified in asking the general taxpayer to provide the land and accessories for these men, when we are not prepared to do the same for the ordinary white man?

C.E. Taplin: I think we owe a larger amount of sympathy and have a greater responsibility towards the natives than towards the whites, because we are occupying their country.[136]

The results of the Royal Commission, from the point of view of the Ngarrindjeri, were bitterly disappointing. In fact, despite all the travelling and the weeks spent in session and the days spent compiling reports etc, the Commissioners emerged with very little to offer the Aborigines. The only suggestion which had any real effect on the Ngarrindjeri was the recommendation by the Commissioners that the four reserves — Pt. McLeay, Pt. Pearce, Koonibba and Killalpaninna — should be taken over by the Government. Killalpaninna became a private cattle station before this could happen, and Koonibba was not taken over until 1963; but the two older missions were finally taken over on 1 January 1916. The recommendation to assume responsibility for Raukkan was published in October 1913, in the Progress Report — so that for over two years there was continued indecision and further financial difficulty, as the A.F.A. attempted to carry on, on a temporary basis. When the decision was

finally made, another government was in power, and the whole world (including 15 soldiers from Raukkan) was embroiled in Europe's blood bath. There were very few who cared at all about the fate of a handful of 'half-caste blacks'. It was thus that the A.F.A.'s fifty six year tenure of Raukkan, and its intimate relationship with the Ngarrindjeri, came to an inauspicious end.

CHAPTER VII. FOOTNOTES.

[1]Advertiser 2 August 1905 (editorial)

[2]Ibid. 12 August 1908.

[3]Register 14 August 1908.

[4]Mr Justice Herbert quoted in the Advertiser 12 August 1908.

[5]S.A. Parliamentary Paper No 98, 1971, p.105.

[6]Advertiser 22 August 1910.

[7]Register 19 August 1910.

[8]Act No 1048 Georgii V (1911) Section 10.

[9]Ibid. Section 17 (1).

[10]Ibid. Section 38 (1) (m).

[11]Regulations under the Aborigines Act 1911 21 August 1919 Regulation 9 (m).

[12]Ibid. 10 May 1917 Regulation 9 (i).

[13]Ibid. Regulation 5.

[14]Ibid. Regulation 2.

[15]Ibid. Regulation 1.

[16]Act No 1048 Gerogii V (1911) Section 38.

[17]Register 19 December 1908.

[18]Register 17 June 1914.

[19]Minute Book V 8 September 1913.

[20]Ibid. 10 October 1913.

[21]Ibid. 7 November 1913.

[22]Daily Herald 1 June 1914.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Encyclopaedia Britannica Chicago, William Benton, 1961 Vol II p.394 A.

[26]Daily Herald 1 June 1914.

[27]Ibid.

CHAPTER VII. FOOTNOTES.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Cotton B.C. (ed) Aboriginal Man in South and Central Australia Adelaide S.A. Govt 1966 p.33.

[30]Ibid. pp.11 and 12.

[31]It was known by 1914 that the dingo had been brought to Australia by the Aborigines.

[32]Advertiser 22 July 1914.

[33]Register 22 July 1914.

[34]Advertiser 20 July 1914 (my emphasis).

[35]Duguid Charles No Dying Race Adelaide Rigby 1963 p.146.

[36]Advertiser 22 July 1914.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Minute Book V 18 September 1914 and 15 January 1915.

[39]Annual Report 1903.

[40]Register 25 November 1903.

[41]Annual Report 1905.

[42]Annual Report 1912.

[43]Minute Book V 16 August 1912.

[44]Visitors Book II 12 October 1912.

[45]Minute Book V 22 October 1912.

[46]Visitors Book 9 November 1912.

[47]Minute Book V 13 December 1912 and 7 January 1913.

[48]Ibid. 19 March 1912.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Minute Book V 26 June 1913.

[51]Ibid. 4 July 1912.

[52]Ibid. 2 August 1912.

[53]Ibid. 27 April 1914.

[54]Ibid. 15 May 1914.

CHAPTER VII. FOOTNOTES.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Ibid. 14 July 1914.

[57]Ibid. 14 August 1914; 16 October 1914 and 1 December 1914.

[58]Ibid. 18 September 1914.

[59]Ibid. 16 October 1914.

[60]Ibid. 27 February 1914.

[61]Walter Hutley's Report Easter 1915 copied into Minute Book V p.115.

[62]Ibid.

[63]School Inspectors Register 1911.

[64]Ibid. 1919.

[65]Minute Book V 30 May 1912.

[66]Ibid.

[67]Ibid. 16 August 1912.

[68]Ibid. 10 April 1913.

[69]Ibid. 13 June 1913.

[70]Ibid. 26 June 1913.

[71]Ibid. 27 February 1914.

[72]Australian Christian 28 January 1958.

[73]Taped interview with Mrs Jean Birt, 1973. (Mrs Birt is George Rankine's daughter.)

[74]Ibid. and Minute Book V 16 October 1914.

[75]Minute Book V 10 May 1912.

[76]Advertiser 23 May 1912.

[77]Ibid.

[78]Annual Report 1910.

[79]Advertiser 23 May 1912.

[80]Minute Book V 12 July 1912.

CHAPTER VII. FOOTNOTES.

[81]Ibid. 22 October 1912.

[82]Ibid. 7 January 1913.

[83]The other major South Australian inquiry — that of 1899 — was chiefly concerned with legislation relating to the Northern Territory.

[84]Reports of the Royal Commission on the Aborigines Parliamentary Papers No 21 (1913) and No 26 (1916) Minutes of Evidence, Question 1733.

[85]Ibid. Question 2683.

[86]Ibid. Question 2890.

[87]Ibid. Question 2608.

[88]Ibid.

[89]Ibid. Questions 1093-1095.

[90]Ibid. Questions 1872 and 1896.

[91]Ibid. Final Report p.V.

[92]Ibid. Question 893.

[93]Ibid. Question 2567.

[94]Ibid. Questions 1720 and 1721.

[95]Ibid. Question 1729.

[96]Ibid. Question 1733.

[97]Ibid. Question 1960.

[98]Ibid. Question 232.

[99]Ibid. Question 1733. See also Rowley C.D. The Destruction of Aboriginal Society Ringwood Penguin 1972 Chapter 10.

[100]1913 Royal Commission Question 220.

[101]Ibid. Question 1560.

[102]Ibid. Question 1745.

[103]Ibid. Interim Report p.x No 26 k.

[104]Ibid. p.10 No 26 g.

[105]Ibid. Questions 2611, 1143 and 389.

CHAPTER VII. FOOTNOTES.

[106]Ibid. Question 2534.

[107]Ibid. Question 726 Addendum.

[108]Ibid. Questions 369 and 370.

[109]Ibid. Question 1138.

[110]Taped interview with Edgar Lampard (1973) and Tom Bonney (1975). These men are the sons of Henry Lampard and Charles Bonney.

[111]Various references attest to this fact. See for example Edith Ralph's article in Register 6 April 1907.

[112]1913 Royal Commission Question 465.

[113]Ibid. Question 464.

[114]Ibid. Question 598.

[115]Ibid. Question 1079.

[116]Minute Book V 15 May 1914.

[117]1913 Royal Commission Question 599.

[118]Ibid. Question 697.

[119]Ibid. Question 727.

[120]Ibid. Question 513.

[121]Ibid. Question 584.

[122]Ibid. Question 591.

[123]Ibid. Question 269.

[124]Ibid. Question 271.

[125]Ibid. 727.

[126]Advertiser 30 November 1894. The Annual Report for 1895 points out that the two men were to be sent to Point Pearce.

[127]1913 Royal Commission Question 745.

[128]Ibid. Question 728.

[129]Ibid. Question 1585.

[130]Ibid. Question 1445.

[131]Ibid. Question 1526.

CHAPTER VII. FOOTNOTES.

[132] Ibid. Question 2235.

[133] Ibid. Question 2463.

[134] Ibid. Questions 2378-2384.

[135] Ibid. Question 2504.

[136] Ibid. Question 1176.

CONCLUSION.

Pour your pitcher of wine into the river
And where is your wine?
There is only the river.

from Assimilation-No! by Kath Walker

By handing over the control of Raukkan and its environs to the Government, the A.F.A. did not thereby sever its ties with the Ngarrindjeri completely. The Association continued to support missionary and medical work there, until relieved of these responsibilities by the Parkin Mission a decade later; and even after this contribution ceased, the A.F.A. continued to maintain an interest in the happenings at Raukkan. But, both for Raukkan and for the Association, the parting on 1 January 1916 signalled the beginning of a rapid decline.

Predictably, the Government did not pour finance into industry at Raukkan to boost employment there, and neither did it find more land to enable the people to become self-supporting. On the contrary, the Government influence appears to have been almost totally destructive. One of the first actions taken by the Aborigines Department was the closure of the dormitories, and the disbandment of a boarding school system that had worked efficaciously since 1860. It was a bitter blow to the Ngarrindjeri, who had always supported it, and had hoped that Government finances would enable the scheme to be expanded so that, as previously, it could cater for all those who wished to make use of its facilities.

Over the years, much more has been destroyed, until by the early nineteen seventies, the once idyllic little lake-side village, with its gardens, trees, shrubs and beautifully kept cottages, was

a barren rural slum: run-down, unattractive and depressing. Even the orchards had been razed in order, so it is said, 'to stop the children from pinching fruit'. Not so much as a stump remains to show where the fruit trees and vines once flourished.

Since the Second World War, the motivation to leave Raukkan has become increasingly stronger, especially since the nineteen-fifties, when the Government re-embraced the policy of Assimilation, and began putting pressure on those who yet remained, to get off the reserves; and took the positive step of helping some of them to find employment and accommodation in various towns and suburbs. As was the case in Taplin's time, it has generally been the rule that the most capable and talented people have been the first to go, and with the process going on for over a century now, the result has been to leave the little community depleted of the very people that any community needs, if it is to survive and function properly. There have been some notable exceptions to this rule, and also there were always people like David Ngunaitponi, who, having lived most of his life in the grinkari world, returned to The Ancient Way to spend his twilight years, and to die amongst his own people. But overall, the result has been that the Ngarrindjeri are spread practically throughout the State — and beyond; and although there is no way of determining population numbers with any degree of accuracy, it would appear that there are now more Ngarrindjeri descendants residing in Adelaide than anywhere else. The distinctive Ngarrindjeri surnames which appear throughout this thesis, as well as the few European surnames they adopted (Wilson, Rigney, Rankine etc.), are indicative of Ngarrindjeri descent, but with wives changing name on being married,

the surnames do not reveal the entire picture.

Most of the Ngarrindjeri now live in precisely the same way as many of their fellow Australians, and appear to be distinguishable from them only by a distinctive surname, or a slightly darker skin, or possibly not even these. A few still make traditional artefacts as a hobby, but no one now alive, can speak more than a few words of the language. There can clearly never be any going back now, even though some Ngarrindjeri descendants are trying hard to find out as much about the old culture and language as they possibly can. A dying language or culture can be kept alive by enthusiasts, but once it has died there can be no resuscitation.

The question may well be asked as to whether the warning inherent in Kath Walker's brilliant metaphor, has not become manifest as far as the Ngarrindjeri are concerned. Have they not, in fact, become water, indistinguishable from the rest of us (apart from one or two superficialities)? My own opinion is that this is not yet so. Amongst the Ngarrindjeri — even those who have lived in Adelaide for all, or most of their lives — there is still a distinctive quality, which is very difficult to define, but which is perhaps best described as a quiet yet resolute pride. They seem to be no longer convinced of the inferiority of the Europeans, as Tooreetparne's generation was, but nothing — not all the poverty, the unemployment, the discriminatory laws, the institutionalizing and the deliberate teaching — has been able to convince them that the reverse is the case. Their very survival in the face of so much adversity is a remarkable achievement in itself, and a clear indication of the strength of character that their progenitors be-

queathed to them.

There is one other distinguishing feature of the Ngarrindjeri which they will never lose, which can never be taken from them and which ought to be a lasting source of pride: this is, their modern history. It is unlike the history of any other people, certainly in this State. A valiant little nation was overrun by people who had the backing of the British Empire at the height of its power. Yet it never gave up: instead, it attempted to come to terms with the conquerors and to enter into the invading civilization. The people showed conclusively that they could not only master the new culture, they could excel at it. The fact that they were still rejected and oppressed had nothing to do with the Ngarrindjeri, unless it could be claimed that, like the Poonindie farmers, they succeeded too well. But having tried to retain the old, and then having excelled at the new, all to no avail, there was really nowhere for the Ngarrindjeri to turn — there was nothing else they could try: the only path left open to them, in an anti-Aboriginal society, went downwards. Yet even in going down — from about 1911 onwards — they have fought all the way, and their recent history, dismal though it is overall, is not without its positive achievements.

One of the chief lessons to be learned from the Ngarrindjeri experience, is that minority groups which lose control over their own destiny, are in a hopeless position. The Ngarrindjeri were at the mercy of the grinkari majority from 1840 onwards; and with the effluxion of time, their dependence on their conquerors increased, until, by 1911, the dominant race were also, by law, their captors and gaolers. Having forced them in on Raukkan, the Europeans did not

have to shoot or poison them, they simply turned their backs and let them die of malnutrition and respiratory diseases; and in more recent times, of alcoholism, Huntington's chorea, and despair. Those who are concerned that the only major South Australian group to survive the invasion — the Pitjantjatjara — should continue to survive and flourish, might take note of this point. The Pitjantjatjara are now in a position which is similar, in many ways, to the situation of the Ngarrindjeri a century ago. They have one great advantage: the Government has given them back a substantial amount of their own country. But they are still not self-supporting; and in any case, no Australian should now be naive enough to think, that a future, much less enlightened government, may not undo, or even reverse, the good works of the past. The Poonindie people also seemed secure — until the grinkaris began to covet their land.

Had the Ngarrindjeri been granted a sizeable tract of freehold land, which could never have been taken from them, their present situation would have been entirely different. Because they were not given this opportunity to fend for themselves, the State is now forced to pay countless thousands of dollars each year in maintaining people who are socially, physically and mentally ill: the proportion of southern Aborigines who spend time in gaol is alone an indictment of past policy, and constitutes a heavy burden on the State's resources. But this is only part of the price which South Australians are now paying for the callousness, greed and inhumanity of their forebears. The major loss we have suffered is that our State has been deprived of a group of people who could have contributed a great deal to South Australian society as a whole. The ac-

CONCLUSION.

cumulated wisdom of thirty centuries of philosophical and psychological study; the magnificent dances, songs and opera; the detailed knowledge of the environment; and, perhaps most of all, the physical, spiritual and mental powers of the race itself — all have been more or less destroyed. The grinkaris were well aware of the fact that people do not simply maintain their numbers in this competitive, capitalist world: they either increase or decline. And this was, perhaps, the crucial issue. Nobody would have minded much if the survivors had simply stayed on Raukkan and just kept on surviving. But the spirit of the people could not allow them to do this: they had to go out and become the best shearers in South Australia; they had to preach in cathedrals, build churches, patent inventions, sing for governors — and so on; and quite clearly, had conditions been at all favourable, or equitable, they would have multiplied and spread vigorously throughout the Colony and the State. For the race that held the power, there was only one answer to this: repression.

As far as the future is concerned, only the Ngarrindjeri descendants themselves can and should determine what will be their course of action. It could be that they will merge more and more with the majority, until only a distinctive surname will indicate to a person that generations ago he or she must have had a Ngarrindjeri forebear — in much the same way as another Australian might be aware that he once had a Scottish ancestor. On the other hand, the pan-Aboriginal movement is increasing in strength, and some of the Ngarrindjeri, accepting the fact that they can never restore their own culture, are nevertheless resisting Europeanization by embracing the cultures of their northern racial brethren.

CONCLUSION.

Raukkan was finally handed over to the Ngarrindjeri in 1974 — about a century too late. It was, of course, the right thing to do, but since it had become practically moribund, simply handing it over is not now good enough — as it would have been years ago when there were dynamic, talented, and cultured leaders still living there. Something more needs to be done with the old village now — a breath of life is required to set the coals aglowing; and money alone is not the breath of life.

I would suggest that a large boarding school could be established, based on the tradition of the one the Ngarrindjeri supported, and which trained so many of them from 1860 to 1916. This school could cater for Aboriginal children throughout the State — and beyond — who wish to attend and learn either more about Aboriginal cultures, or (as many northern people wish to do) more about European culture.

The setting is ideal. Just across the Lake at Clayton, is the State's Outward Bound School; and the Raukkan school, I would suggest, could incorporate many Outward Bound principles. It could make full use of the Lake for swimming, canoeing, sailing and so on, with special instructors provided. It could make full use of the farm, for such purposes as running horses (for its riding school), and for growing vegetables for the boarders. The aim of the school would be to enable children of Aboriginal descent to develop their talents and qualities to the very fullest, and to equip them to go out and succeed in a competitive world. By law now, employment opportunities are no longer closed against the Ngarrindjeri or other Aboriginal people, but half a century of inadequate education has

ensured that there are very few who are equipped to take advantage of them. A school at Raukkan, established to cater for Aboriginal education needs, would do much to help right this wrong.

If Raukkan did become a worthwhile educational institution, where self-respect, cross-fertilization of ideas, and cultural growth flourished, then the village of Raukkan would also flourish. And in doing so, it might develop into an attractive holiday village, where Ngarrindjeri families from all over the State could enjoy living in their ancestral country for a few weeks every year, if they so desired.

I make these suggestions with a certain amount of hesitancy, bearing in mind the fact that one of the banes of the Ngarrindjeri for the last century and more, has been that well-meaning grinkaris have considered that they have known what was best for the Ngarrindjeri, and have made decisions affecting them without consulting the people themselves. I put forward these proposals however, simply as ideas which the Ngarrindjeri may wish to consider — and either reject or develop, depending on how they view them.

One can scarcely study the history of the Ngarrindjeri, without being moved by the injustices which they have suffered. And there can be no doubt that the people of South Australia and their government have a long-standing debt still waiting to be paid to the surviving descendants of this ancient nation. Yet just how much assistance the Ngarrindjeri can expect from the South Australian Government remains to be seen. Any government in a democracy can only give to a deprived minority group as much assistance as the majority will allow: otherwise it ceases to be the government. And while

CONCLUSION.

the present A.L.P. Government of South Australia has shown much more concern for Aborigines than any previous government; and while it has done more in the way of enacting enlightened legislation, and putting such legislation and policy into practice, than any other Australian government; yet there is every indication that it is approaching the limits to which the voters of the majority race will allow it to go, in its support of the minority.

If, for instance, the emerging Ngarrindjeri leaders were to decide that the proposal to reinstitute the boarding school at Raukkan ought to be proceeded with, the Government would undoubtedly face opposition if it supported them financially. And without massive government assistance, the scheme would not even 'get off the ground'. Some Europeans would be strongly opposed to the building of an exclusively Aboriginal boarding school; and many country people, who have had to pay substantial fees to send their children to private boarding schools, would be particularly irate.

The obvious argument to put forward in support of the scheme, would be that the school was simply being re-opened, after having been wrongfully closed by the Government in 1916. Nevertheless, it would be a difficult battle for the Government: one which would win it very few friends, while costing it votes, that at this stage, with no majority at all in the House, it can ill afford to lose.

Perhaps, therefore, we must accept the fact that, in the long run, a substantial part of the solution to what the Ngarrindjeri call the 'grinkari problem', lies in education: not only the education of the Ngarrindjeri, but also (and most importantly) the education of the Europeans.

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APPENDIX I

Excerpt from a letter to the South Australian Register of 3 October 1840 from 'A Colonist of 1836'.

That you have acted on a principle conscientiously adopted, I believe, nor have I heard any one of those who most applaud the action you condemn, doubt. But you have done an act of injustice to the tribes of natives who have been the objects of "retributive justice", as it is strongly termed, which you will excuse me for saying is fatal in its premises to these miserable creatures, and most gross and erroneous in its conclusions. You unhesitatingly pronounce the Milmenrura tribe "cruel and remorseless savages" — "wholesale butcherers of defenceless beings thrown within their power" — while you at the same time admit that of "their number, character and disposition very little is positively known."

This is contradictory enough: but let me remind you that the whole history of the murders is one upon which there is no evidence beyond hearsay, and the bodies and clothes of the passengers of the Maria. It is a case of supposition from beginning to end: and to jump to a conclusion from such premises that these unfortunate people were murdered by the natives, is neither logical nor fair. To establish murder in the case, a knowledge of all particulars and circumstances which led to and preceded death is indispensible. If conjecture is to form an ingredient in the case it cannot be confined to one side, but must have scope on both. You maintain the tribe to be wholesale butcherers — ruthless murderers of defenceless beings: but your opinion would be qualified were it to be supposed that the passengers of the Maria were the aggressors: or even that, from one of those incidental circumstances of which the history of our inter-

APPENDIX I

course with the islanders of these seas affords numerous illustrations, some sudden jealousy or dispute, or improper interference, on one side or the other, among parties who, but a moment before, were on friendly terms, may have led to a melee, in which the weaker party was exterminated.

But I have a stronger and more substantial view of the character of the Milmenrura Tribe, of whom "so very little is known." It is two years ago or rather more since the Fanny was wrecked, and at that period "the wholesale butchering of defenceless human beings" had not commenced — for my respected friend the Rev. William Longbottom, his lady, child, various other passengers, Captain Gill the master of the vessel, and five sailors resided for no less a period than forty days with this very Milmenrura tribe, were hospitably fed by them on fish and such food as their slender means provided, remained on friendly terms, and were accompanied by them in peace and safety to the borders of their territory on the Murray. Mr. Longbottom has often publicly stated in the hearing of myself and many others now in Adelaide, that he never entertained any apprehension from these natives, and that the chief difficulty he had to contend with in his friendly intercourse with them was to restrain the loose conduct of the sailors with the native women. It is a singular fact that the man Roach, who was supposed to be murdered by these natives, and for whose death the life of a native was taken by Major O'Halloran, was one of the crew of the Fanny. Mr. Longbottom's statement was corroborated at the time by Captain Gill of the Fanny, although I do not at this distance of time remember more than the purport of that person's statement.*

APPENDIX I

I have said enough, however, to satisfy you that the Big Murray tribe was not always what you describe them to be: much less that they answer the description which the Advocate-General gave of them in his learned argument to satisfy the Governor that they were a nation at war with us, and entitled from their conduct to no civilized rights. It is, I think, fair to conclude that his Excellency and the Advocate-General were both unacquainted with the facts I have represented, which were notorious to the older colonists, or the latter would never have advanced the following assertions:-

"The tribe in particular known as the 'Milmenrura or Big Murray tribe' is admitted on all hands to be of brutal and ferocious character, not known to us but by murderous, cruel and remorseless acts, and abhorred even by the other native inhabitants, especially by the neighbouring tribes, with whom they are at continual enmity. The sanguinary atrocities committed by this tribe for a series of years, commencing with the murder of Captain Barker, have exhibited one uniform ruthless character of indomitable ferocity which affords no hope that their intercourse with our population can be rendered the means of their civilization or amendment."

The Advocate-General has more shrewdly furnished a clue to the once-friendly natives into a "tribe of ruthless murderers." "The tribes," he says, "inhabiting the country between the sea-shore and the inland track from the eastern colonies, are represented by the concurring accounts of all persons who have conducted stock over that territory, as only restrained from plunder by the fear of force of arms."

There has seldom been an arrival by land from Port Phillip

APPENDIX I

or Sydney, which on its first reaching Adelaide, did not bring some tale of boasting and butchering the natives on the way. There are few in Adelaide who have not heard them vaunt of their exploits in shooting or "peppering" the natives in their route. And there are well-authenticated instances where both the stock-keepers and their masters have related tales of their shooting or hunting down the natives, which they have promptly recanted when it was ascertained that they were affording grounds for a dangerous enquiry into their conduct. That firearms have been unhesitatingly and unscrupulously used by the overland parties there is no doubt, and I consider I have a right at least to suppose that the Milmenrura tribe were changed from friendly to hostile by aggression on the part of the whites: that if there was no offence to them by the passengers of the Maria, they executed upon them as the first of the white tribe which fell into their hands that retribution which the Savage everywhere acknowledges as his rule of action, and in which the Milmenrura natives are probably by this time, convinced by more recent events, is a national practice to which the laws of their civilized white brethren and neighbours admit of no exception.

I am Gentlemen, &c.

A COLONIST OF 1836

*Captain Gill's statement regarding the Milmenrura natives is as follows:-

> "In the forenoon of the day after our wreck we were visited by nine natives. They brought us a fire stick, showed us their water-holes and were every way well-disposed; and during our stay amongst them, which was about seven weeks, they at all times evinced the greatest friendship. They are decidedly the most inoffensive race I ever met."
>
> CAPTAIN GILL's Narrative — Register September 8, 1838.

APPENDIX II

Excerpt from a report by Matthew Moorhouse, Protector of Aborigines, to Lord John Russell, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 20 February 1841.

The remarks in Council, all of which go to prove that the tribes inhabiting the Milmenroora district cannot be legally recognized as British subjects: and I must own that there appears to be moral injustice in imposing the British Constitution upon Aboriginal tribes, except in-so-far as the law of these tribes agree with it. The idea that it is placing the Aborigines on an equality with British subjects is altogether fallacious: it may be viewed as a plea for oppression, for there can be no justice in receiving European evidence against a native, and rejecting, under every circumstance, native evidence against a European.

This sophism is admirably refuted in a pamphlet published by the New Zealand Association, which states, "That the establishment of the same rights and the same obligations can only be fair between parties who have the same power in the same field: but when one of the parties is immeasurably inferior to the other, the only consequence of establishing the same rights and the same obligations for both will be to destroy the weaker under a show of justice: and since it is one of the characteristics of civilization, that every individual is more or less in a state of competition with every other individual, it may safely be inferred that, were a colony of British to implant themselves in New Zealand, on land purchased from the natives, and on which the natives should continue to reside, under the influence of the British law, and on a footing of perfect equality with British subjects, though no cruelty were inflicted, though strict and impartial justice were administered,

APPENDIX II

though posts of honour and emolument were offered equally to all, a species of attrition would at once begin, and never cease till it ended in the degradation and destruction of the New Zealander. In the meantime, neither the New Zealander nor the British might be conscious of the process, and its effects might be deeply lamented by those who have long been settled in the persuasion that the principle of equal laws and equal rights for all is the great glory and blessing of a well-regulated constitution, and would never suspect the possibility of a state of things in which the same principle would be unjust, tyrannical and oppressive.

No law nor any concession of his own could at once convert the New Zealander (New Hollander) into a British subject. The very idea of law supposes a pre-adaptation of nature in these who are to be the subjects of the law. Since, then, the people are not adapted for our laws, the only course that remains for us is to adapt our laws to the people." The experience of the missionaries and myself advises us strongly to recommend exceptional laws for the New Hollander.

In the Milmenroora instance before us, his Excellency had no prescribed forms of common law whereby to punish the offenders: extreme measures were therefore adopted, but measures in which the colonists were fully agreed, as shown forth in their memorial to his Excellency on the 27 September, 1840, and signed by almost all the respectable inhabitants of the colony.

APPENDIX III

Extracts from the diary of Alexander Buchanan, overlander. Published in Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, South Australian Branch, Volume XXII.

15 November 1839 (at the confluence of the Murray and the Darling)

...we from the opposite bank fired upon them also and killed the old chief, when they all took to the Murray and we kept firing as long as they were within shot. There were five or six killed and a good many wounded. We then broke up their canoes and took all their nets and burnt them.

20 November 1839

...we were rather late, the blacks having been over and all gone except one canoe with one man. Him we wounded severely but did not kill him, him being a good way out before we saw him.

22 November 1839

As we were putting the sheep in camp for the night a black was seen in some reeds and the carter fired upon him and killed him.

7 December 1839

Halted and fed the sheep. Saw a good many blacks opposite bank of the river, fired upon them and killed one, the rest made off immediately.

The callousness of these records is made even more disgusting when they are compared with other entries in the same journal, for example:

15 November 1839

Saw a good many blacks. Some came and assisted to drive the sheep in the evening.

20 October 1839

Yesterday morning just when we were starting, the blacks came to the opposite bank of the river with their fishing nets and cried, "White-fellow man, there directly," waving their nets. The meaning of this was they would catch fish for us.

APPENDIX III

These kindly people who were offering to help Buchanan, and who were being murdered and maimed in return, were the very people who only nine years before had ensured that Sturt's journey along the same river was both safe and successful. Coincidentally, Buchanan met Sturt on this trip, just before leaving the Murray to strike across the ranges for Adelaide. Sturt and Governor Gawler were on an exploring trip travelling by boat upstream from Lake Alexandrina. The entry of 9 December 1839 is again illuminating:

> The first boat came to the side and asked if the blacks had been troublesome. We told them they had been pretty quiet except at the Darling they had annoyed us a little. Did not say we had shot any.

APPENDIX IV

Three letters written for Lady Henrietta Smith (Mrs Smith of Dunesk) by her sister, Jemima Russell.

Mrs Smith of Dunesk, to the Rev G. Divorty, Colonial Secretary of the Free Church of Scotland. 6 February 1871.

Revd. Sir,

Mrs. Smith of Dunesk wishes to know the reason why her Black Mission at Point McLeay South Australia has got none of her fund since Mr. Irving went out of the Committee? Mrs. Smith is most particular and told Mr. Irving so, that she wished it all spent on the Conversion of the Blacks. Mrs. Smith was quite provoked when her Missionary, Mr. Reid, got only £50, while Mr. Young wrote Dr. Bonar for leave to insure the Ministers lives for their families. Dr. Bonar objected and told them it would not agree with the Donor's wishes. After Mr. Irving came in, Mrs. Smith was assured that the Blacks would get it, as it was evidently their property. Mrs. Smith assured Mr. Irving it was bought entirely for the Blacks, and all went well while Mr. Irving had the care of it, but Mrs. Smith is now sorry to find that her converts have got nothing since Mr. Irving left. Mrs. Smith desires me to assure the Committee positively, that unless Mr. Taplin's mission, which is hers, gets £150 a year, she will cancel every sum that she has left in her will to the Free Church, and give them to those who will do as she wishes.

Mrs. Smith thought she could put confidence in the Free Church, but this conduct has frightened her.

Will you have the goodness to let the Committee know this, and let Mrs. Smith know before the 16th as the Mail goes on the 17th and

APPENDIX IV

Mrs. Smith wishes to write Mr. Taplin, in so doing you will greatly oblige.

Revd. Sir, your obedient Servant for Henrietta Smith.

Jemima Russell.

P.S. At Mrs. Smith's desire I have put her name instead of my own as she is quite determined in what she says.

J.R.

Mrs. Smith of Dunesk to the Convener of the Colonial Committee of the Free Church of Scotland. 25 March 1871.

Revd. Sir,

I regret that any misunderstanding should have arisen regarding the object to which the proceeds of the land in South Australia, as purchased by me, should be devoted, and I therefore take this opportunity once for all of informing the Colonial Committee of the Free Church that my design in making that purchase was from the first and is still, that the money accruing from it should be employed only in promoting the spiritual interests of the Aboriginal Natives. Any other application of it or any portion of it whatever is therefore directly at variance with my original intentions: and contrary to my wishes. The Land was devoted to God for the exclusive benefit of the poor Blacks in particular. I beg further to state that I have a very special interest in the Mission at Point McLeay, presently under the charge of the Revd. Mr. Taplin where a native church now exists with various members of which I have the satisfaction of being in direct correspondence. It is also an unspeakable comfort to know as far as man can know, that some have been gathered from the natives

APPENDIX IV

into the Kingdom above, and are now forever with the Lord. It is therefore my earnest wish that of the proceeds of the land £150 a year at least, if not the whole, should be given for the support and extension of that Mission alone. Allow me to add that to invest any portion of the money is inconsistent with the purpose for which it was given. Whatever is done for the Australian Natives must be done now, or it may very soon be too late.

I am, Revd. Sir, Yours &c. for Henrietta Smith,

Jemima Russell

P.S. I also wish £100 for more cottages. for H.S.

J.R.

Mrs. Smitn of Dunesk, to Revd. Peter Hope, Secretary of the Colonial Committee, Free Church of Scotland. 30 March 1871.

Revd. Sir,

I received a letter this morning from Mr. Adams, Convener, to whom I wrote a full and distinct expression of my wishes on Saturday, and it has rejoiced me much that the convener has promised to perform my wishes. As you will see the letter, I need say no more unless to what you mention in your letter of giving it to any other colony. With regard to giving any part of the fund to any colony but South Australian Blacks alone, not Whites, I would look upon as robbery, as all of it was solemnly given to God for the behoof of the South Australian Blacks alone, again I say not whites, and no other colony has any right to a farthing of it.

Mr. Taplin's Mission is my own mission, and of course very near my heart. Besides the £150 a year, I earnestly wish them to get £100 for building cottages, and enlarging the village, as they are in-

APPENDIX IV

creasing so fast.

After the convener's letter was gone, I received one from Mr. Taplin which gave me great comfort and shews how much the money is required at the Mission. I did not like to trouble the conveners again and sent it to Mr. Divorty to shew the Committee if he thought it right. I will write and ask Mr. Divorty to let the Committee see it. Long, long have the poor Blacks been kept out of it when they ought to have been enjoying it. But I rejoice to think that now it will be given them, and blessing rest on the Colonial Committee for doing so.

It has cost me much grief,

I remain Revd. Sir, Yours respectfully, for Henrietta Smith

Jemima Russell

APPENDIX V

Petition from Narrung farmers to the Premier of South Australia: 1911 (S.A. Archives).

To the

Honble. J. Verran

Premier

Sir,

We the undersigned residents of Narrung, do most strongly protest against the suggested purchase by the Government of any more land in this District for the Point McLeay Mission Station.

And this we do because the Aboriginal Friends Association have not made proper use of the considerable amount of land now held by them, but are leting (sic) it out to large landholders, and

That the suggested purchase is not in the best interests of the Natives themselves or the white Settlers in this District.

We also beleive (sic) that the Government would more permanently benefit, and uplift the Natives by purchasing suitable blocks of good land in other districts and give assistance to selected families to make homes on them for themselves.

We are, Sir,

Yours respectfully

(the signatures of twenty five Narrung farmers)

Note scribbled on the back of the above petition by Verran (acting in his role of Commissioner of Public Works).

To Mr south
protcter of abroigels
see that no
More Land
his purchased
for the frendly
socity

J V
C P W

APPENDIX V

Excerpt from a letter from Matthew Kropinyeri to Sir Lancelot Stirling (President of the Legislative Council) published in the Register 29 November 1911.

'...I can very well remember the times when there were an abundance of the natural foods of the Aborigine, as fish and fowl by water, with kangaroo, wallaby and opossum in the lands in abundance; but, owing to the advent of the duck boat, the gillnet, with various devices for the entrapping of fish, and the kangaroo hunter's licence, these most necessary requirements for the Aboriginal bill of fare are most conspicuous by their absence, whilst our freedom has been so much encroached upon that it is now impossible for us to go anywhere without being reminded of the fact that we are intruders by those who are so disposed, and are so hemmed around in a few hundred acres on our mission at Point MacLeay by settlers to the east, settlers to the west, settlers to the south, with the broad expanse of the waters of Lake Alexandrina to the north and the mission which once proved sufficient to provide for the wants of our people, who now through the reasons enumerated have been driven into the shelter of the mission to such an extent that it is now totally incompetent to cope with the demand, owing to the insufficiency of its working area. However, I feel assured by the tone of the remarks of your members, that you fully recognise the necessity of more land for the mission, and as this land now offered is of a nature peculiarly adapted to the Aborigine, I will only add the sincere desire of our people that you will do all in your power to obtain these additional lands for our use, so that there will be no doubt whatever in regard to our mission being placed upon a self-supporting basis. So I now leave the matter in your hands, knowing that as you have given ex-

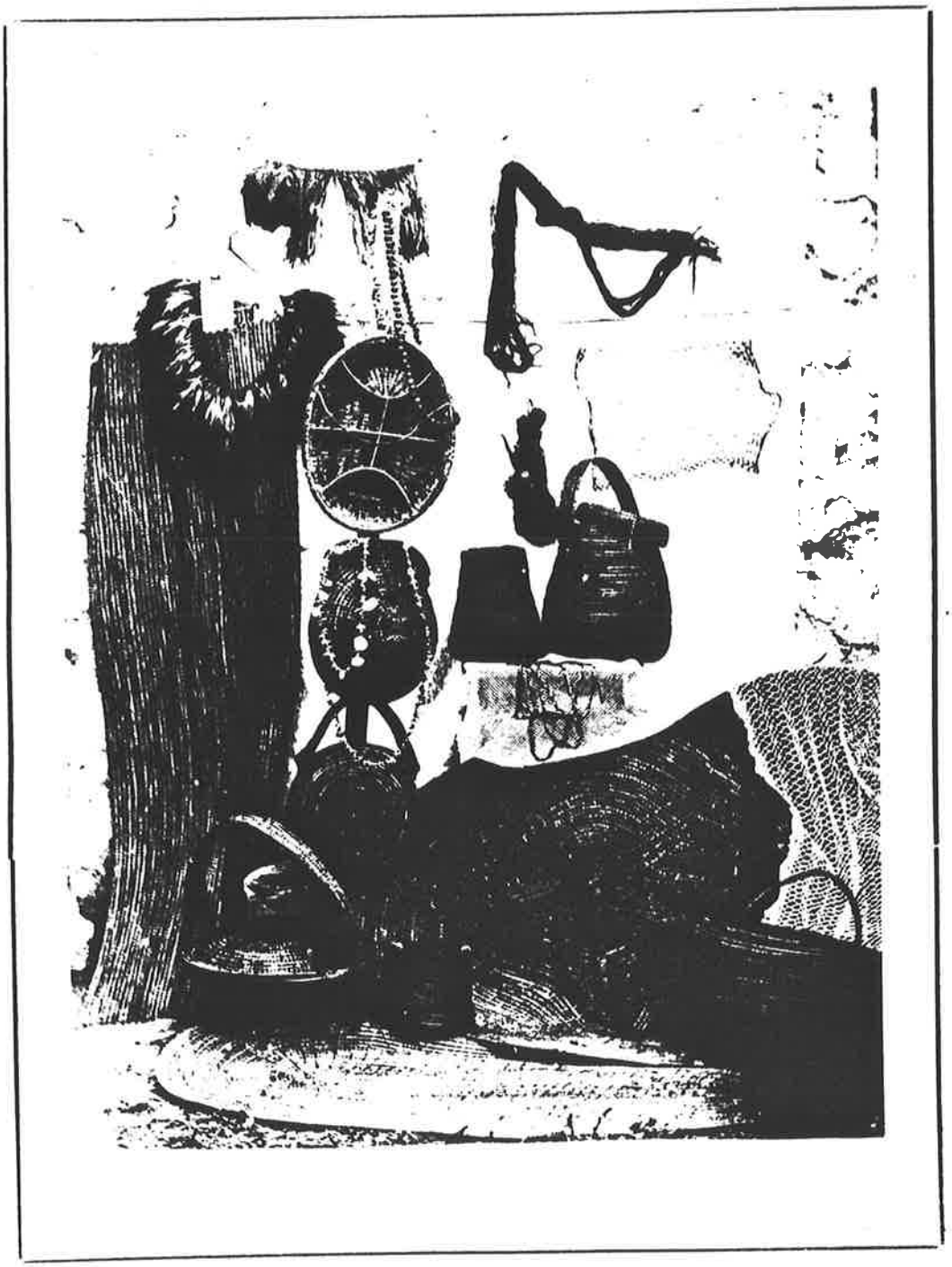
APPENDIX V

pression to the grievous wrong done to our people, in the alienation of our hunting grounds, and that that sense of British justice, under which we are so happy and content to abide, will prompt you to make some reparation; and O! what a grand and glorious opportunity now presents itself for doing so, in a site so suited to all the requirements of the Aborigine. On behalf of Aborigines,

Yours respectfully,

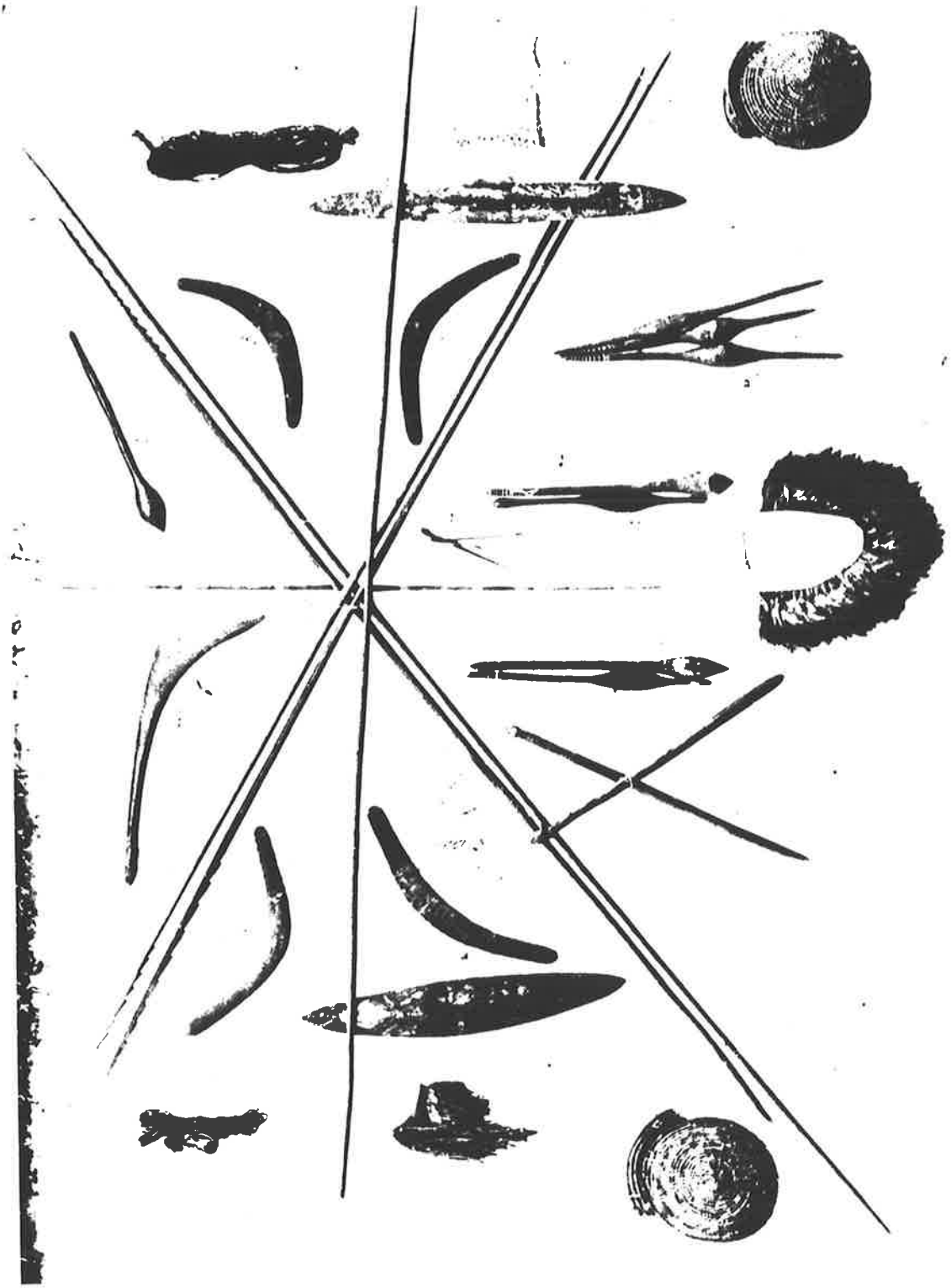
Mat Kropinjere

George Taplin with John Laelinyeri's brother, David (circa 1864).



Mats, Baskets, Nets, Twine, Girdles, and Necklaces, Manufactured by the Narrinyeri.

Some of the beautiful artefacts for which the Ngarrindjeri were renowned.



Part of the extensive array of specialized weapons and implements manufactured and used by the Ngarrindjeri.

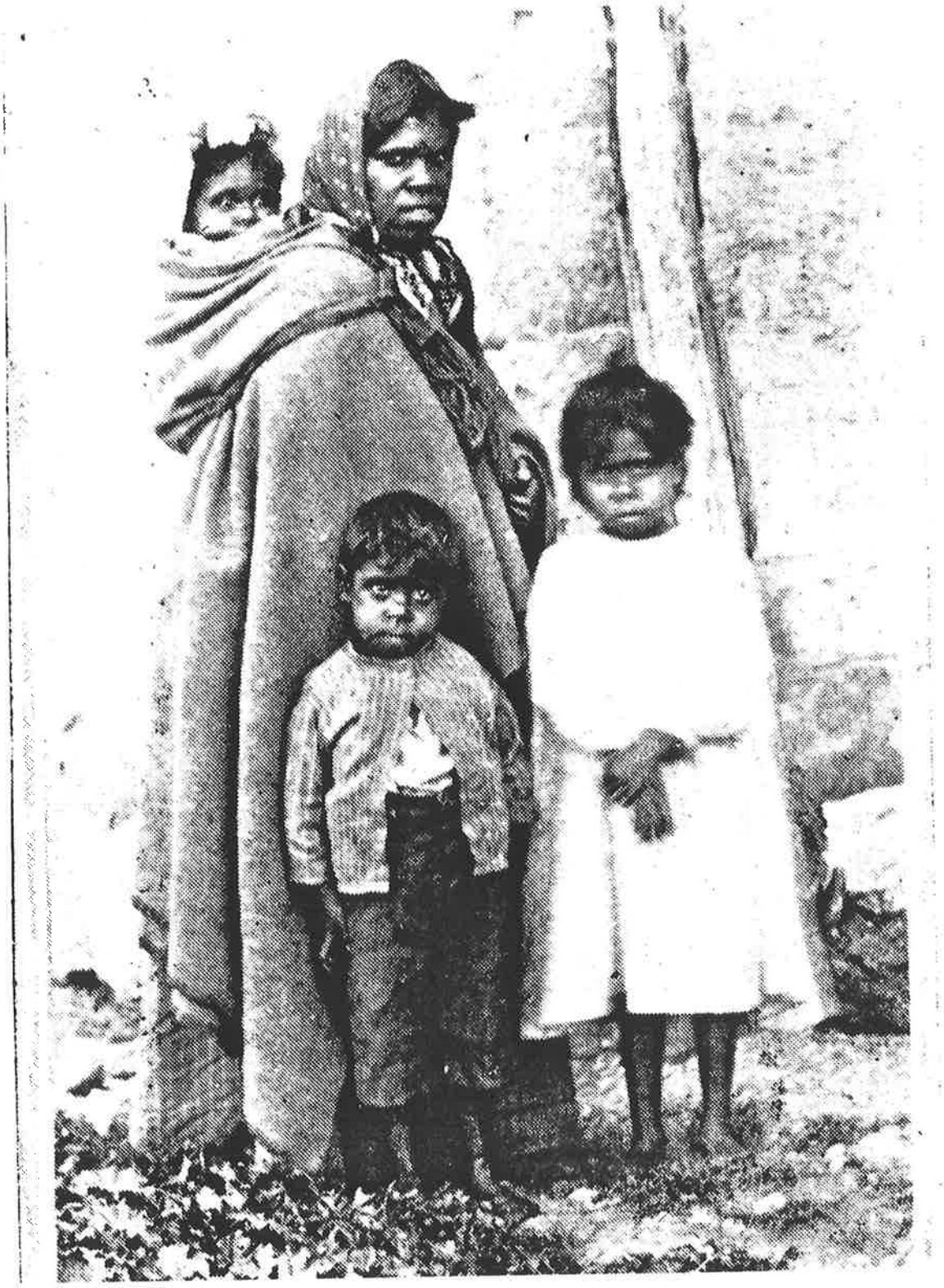
No. 1.—Hunting Party

Drawing by "Vertabrida Solomon," an Aboriginal of the Coorong, in 1856. [From original in possession of Rev. Geo. Taplin.]

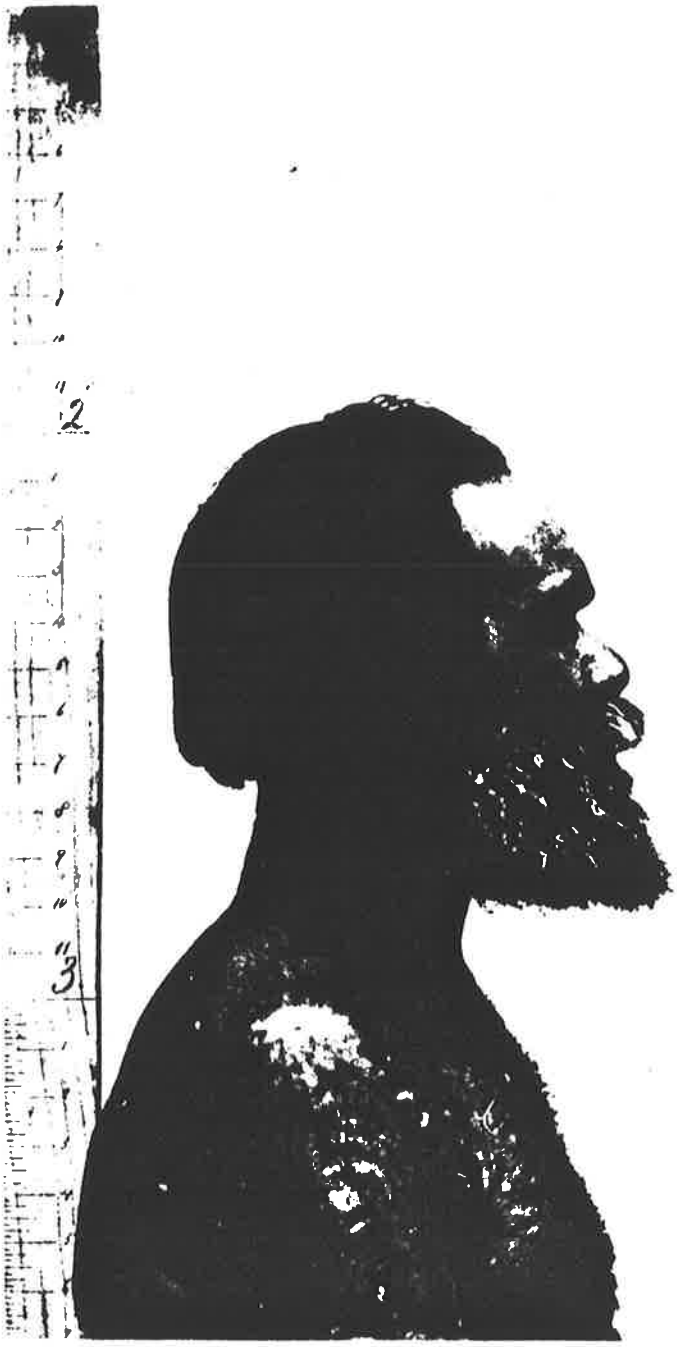
Louis Ngulgare about to hurl the deadly Kaike, or reed-spear (circa 1860).

Pelican (circa 1860).

Teenminnie (circa 1860).



Unidentified Ngarrindjeri woman and children (circa 1910).



James Ngunaitponi (circa 1875).

James Unaipon.

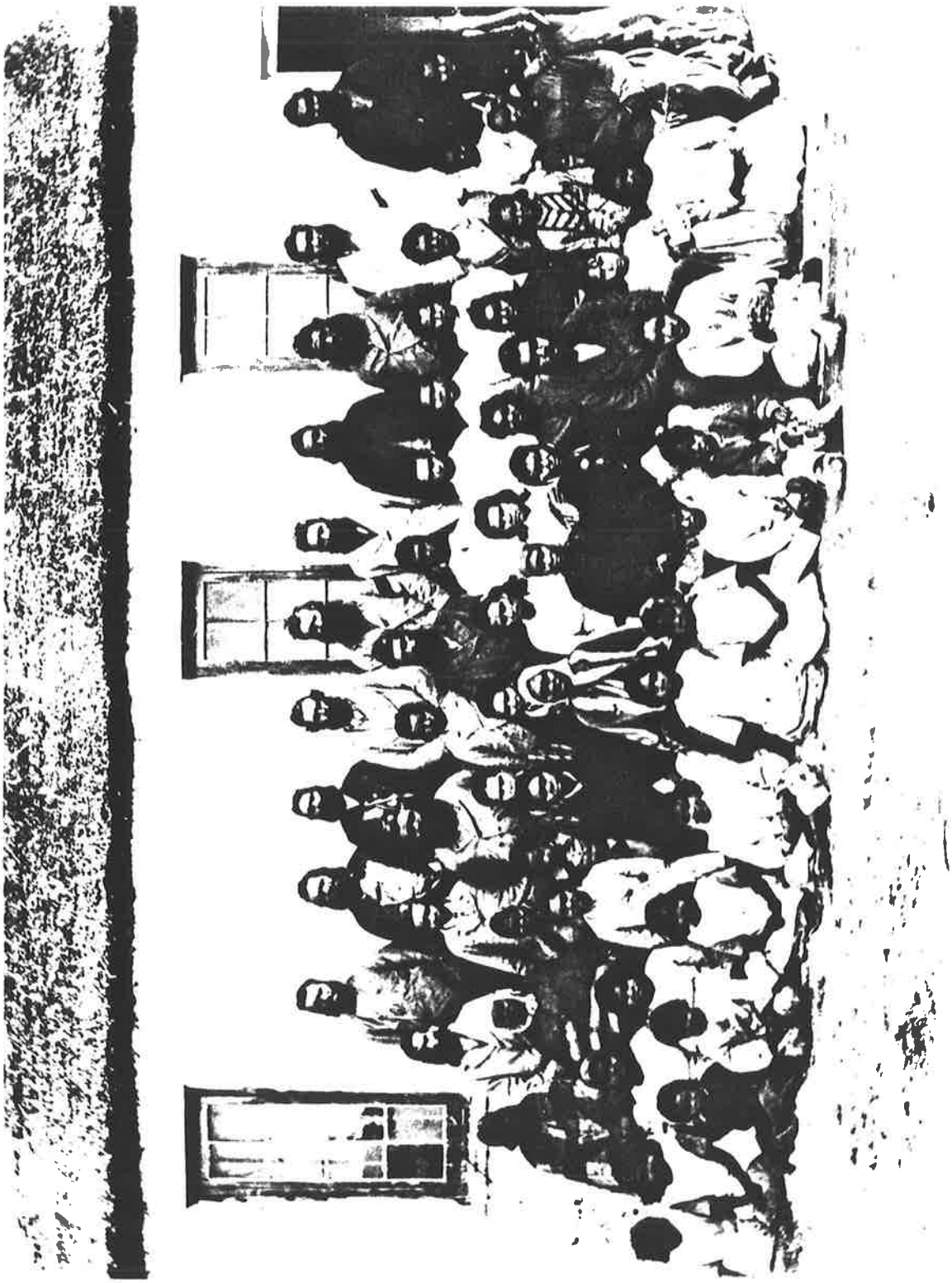
James Ngunaitponi (circa 1885).

Nymbulda Ngunaitponi in advanced years. The others are Eva Close and Eva Seymour.

The changing world of the Ngarrindjeri — traditional spears, nets and baskets: European clothes, billies and pannikins (circa 1880).

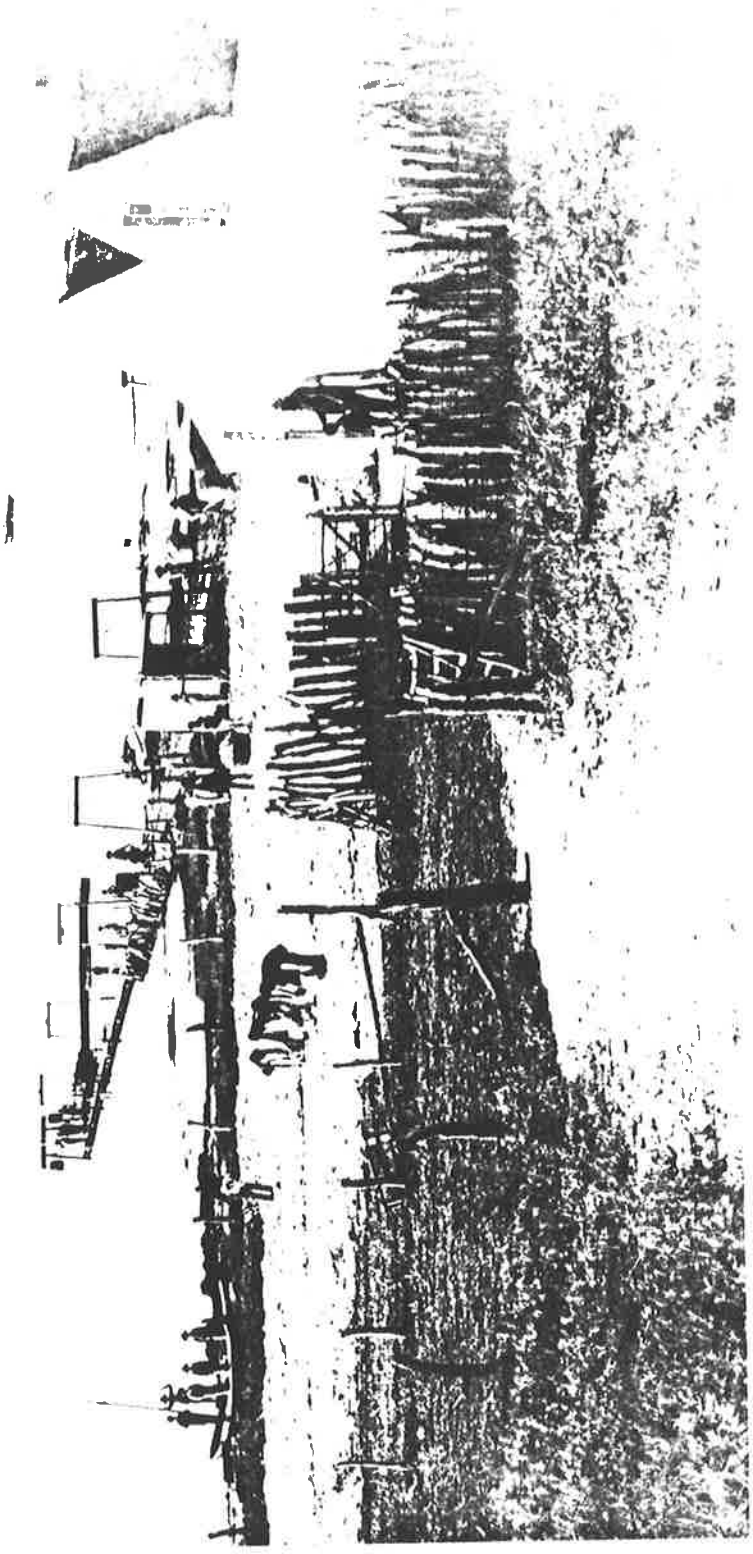
A fine portrait of an unidentified Ngarrindjeri man. Fifty years after the founding of Point McLeay Mission, the ancient crafts were still being maintained (circa 1909).

The school dining room at Raukkan (circa 1880).

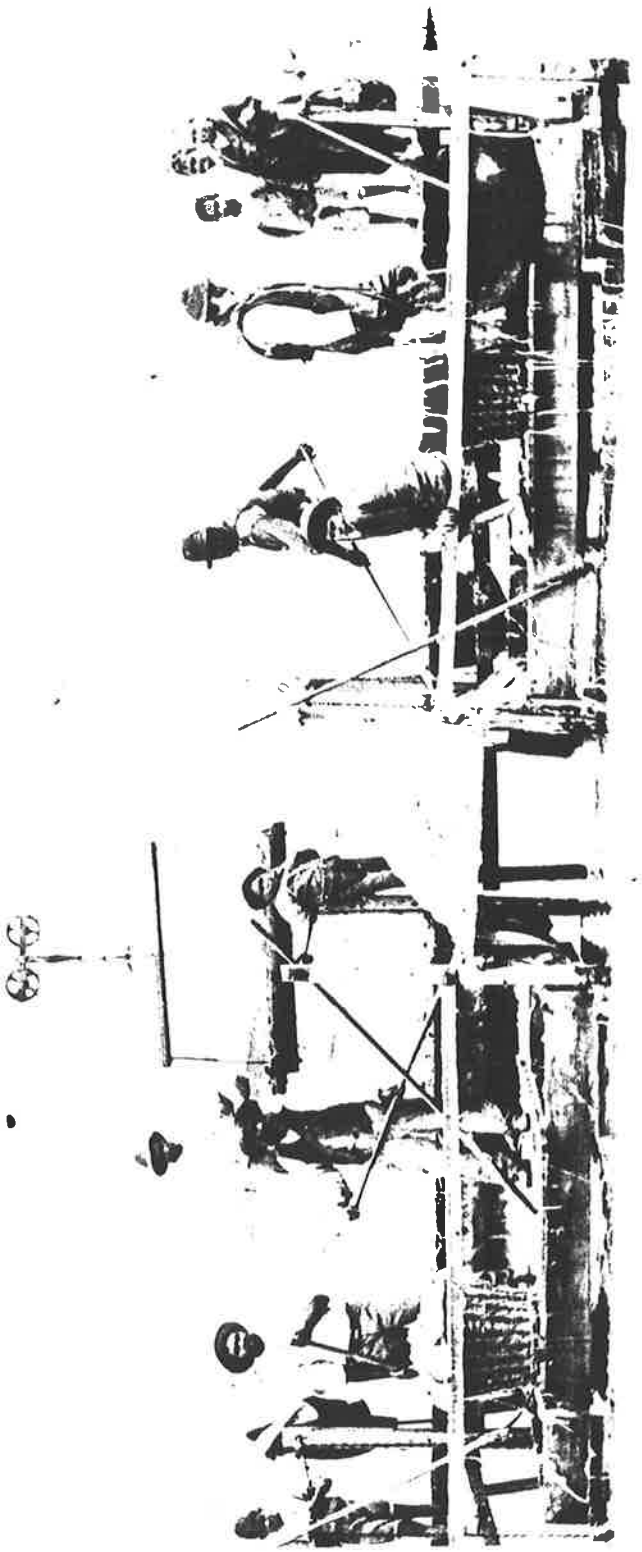


A group of Ngarrindjeri at Raukkan — probably taken in the 1880's (before the roofs were converted from thatch to iron).

Harvest scene at Raukkan (circa 1885).

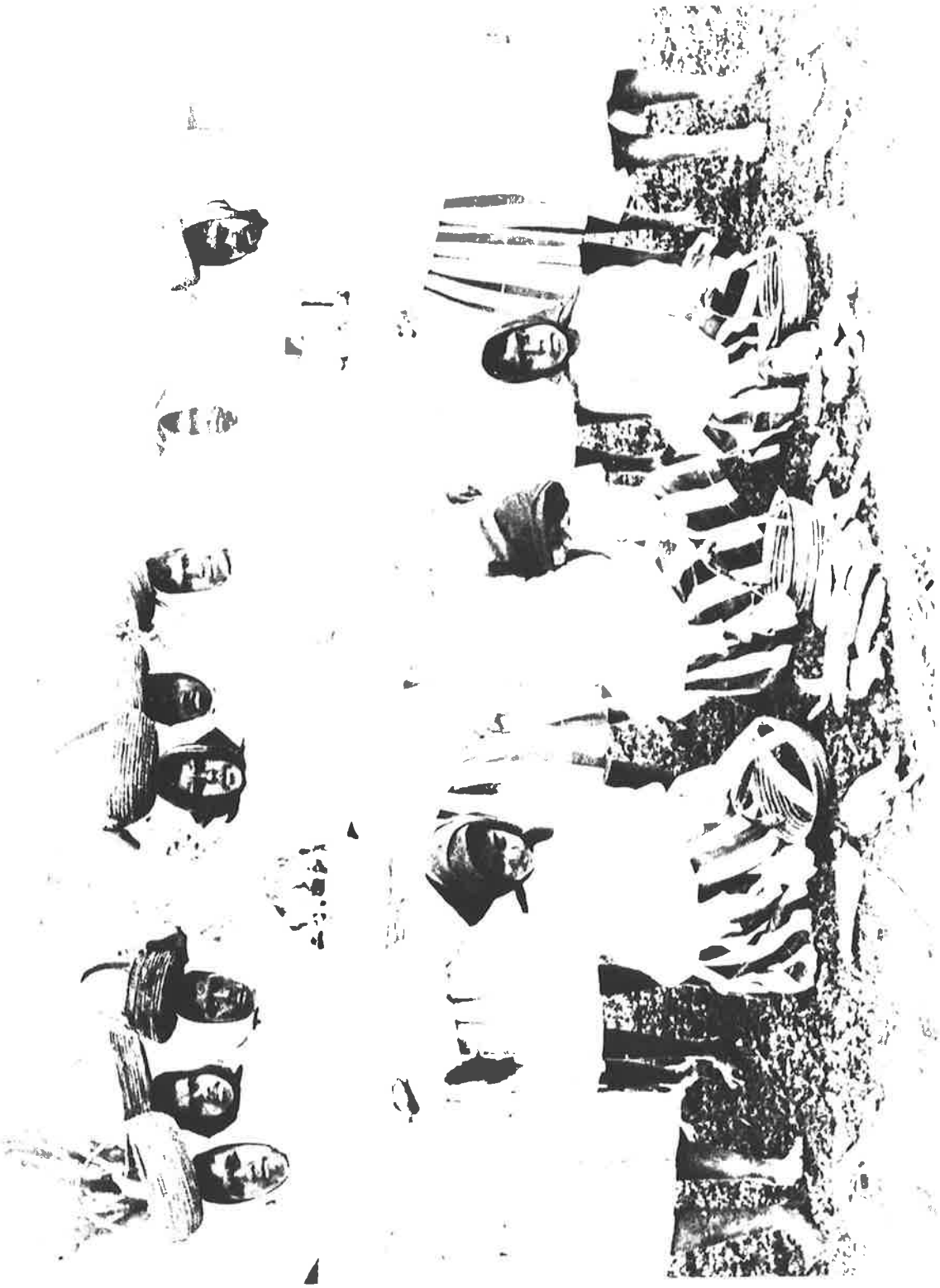


Woolwashing in its heyday — showing the woolshed, woolwashers at work, and the flying fox along the jetty. The Teenminnie is in the background.



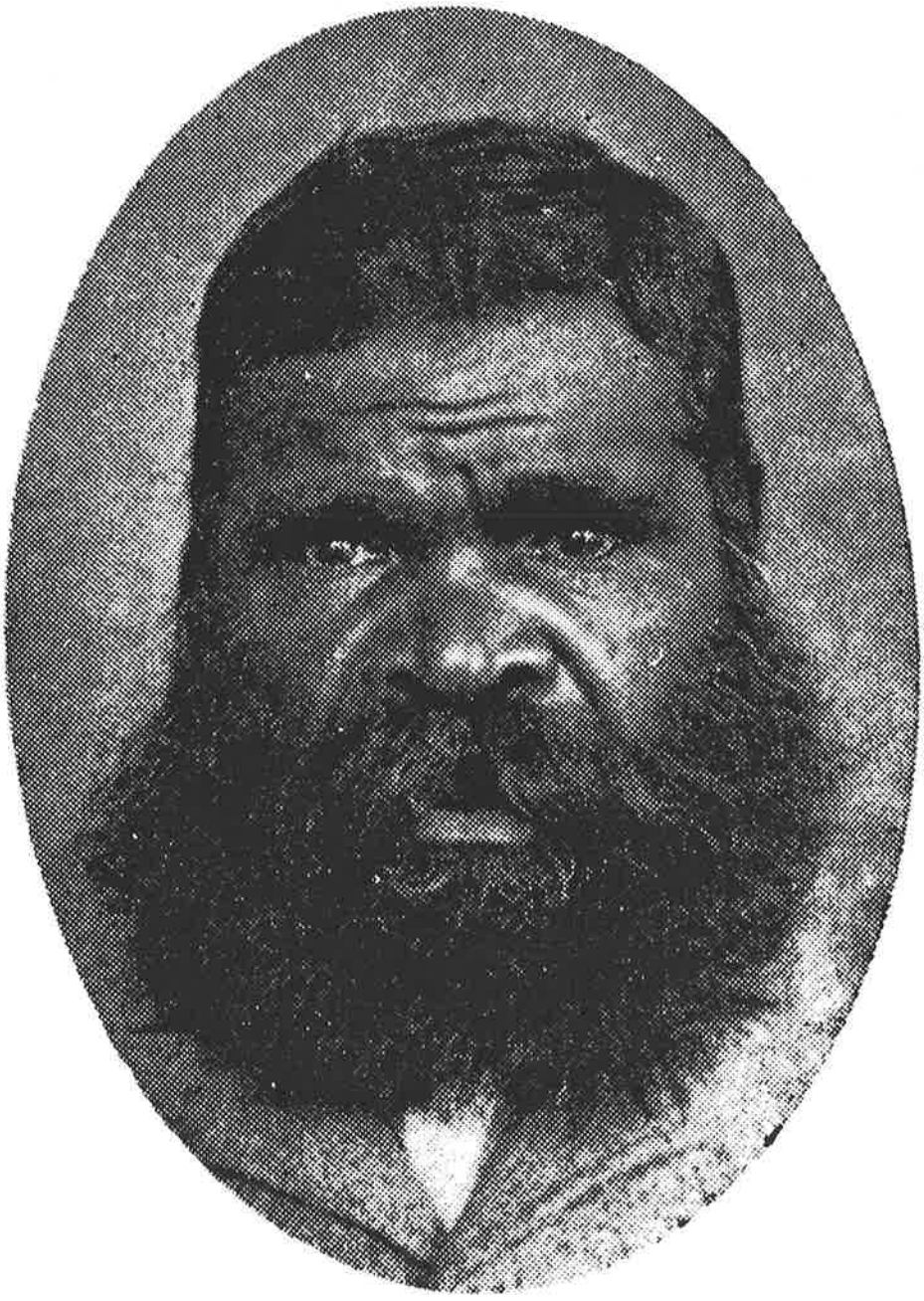
Woolwashers at Raukkan.

Spreading the wool to dry.



Ngarrindjeri girls with traditional baskets and nets; and wearing skirts they have made themselves.

Basket-making (circa 1910).

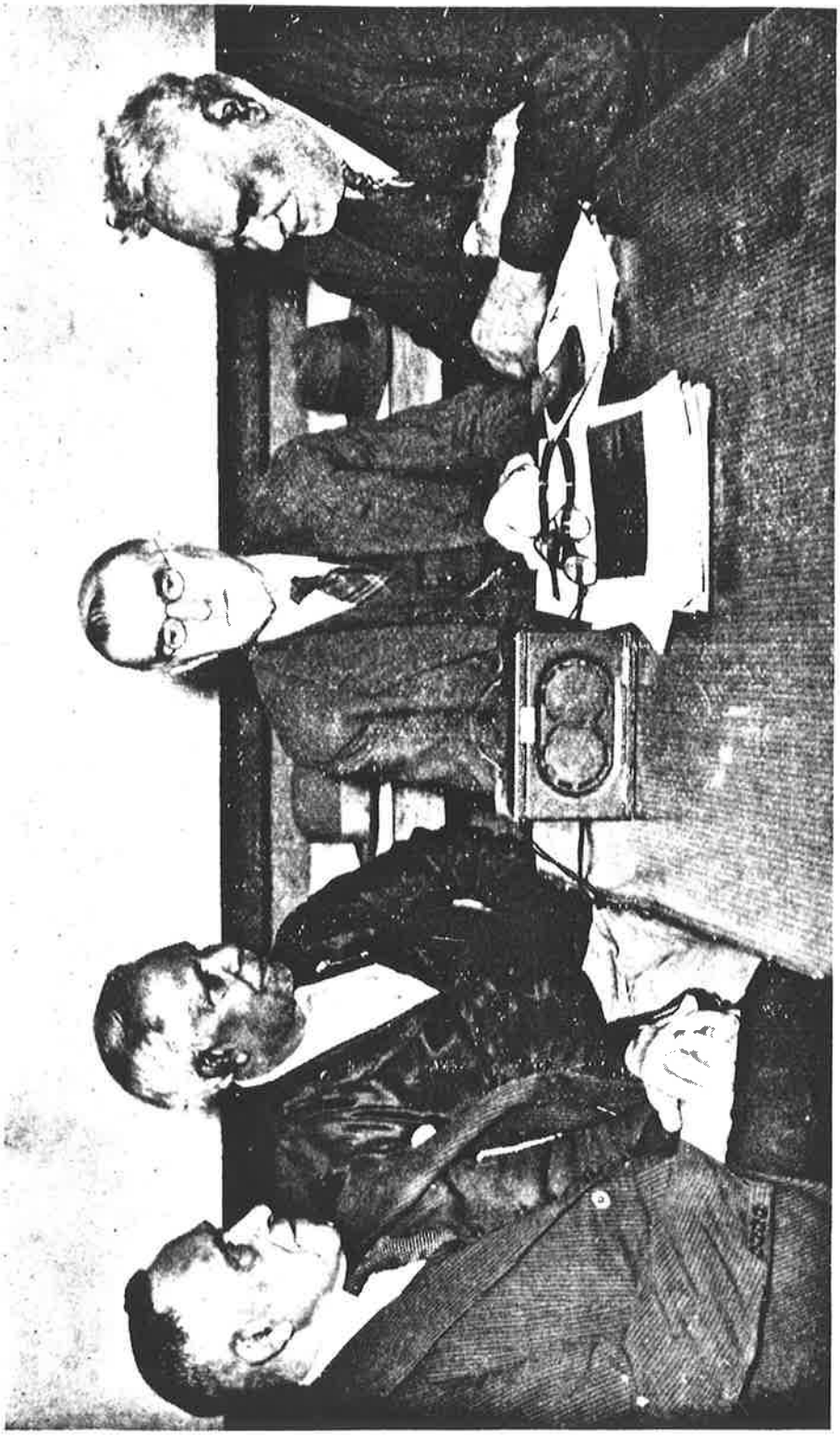


Joseph Koolmateri.

Mrs Louisa Karpany (nee Köntinyeri) aged about 80 in 1911.

John Sumner and family outside their cottage (circa 1890).

David Ngunaitponi after preaching in St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney (1939).



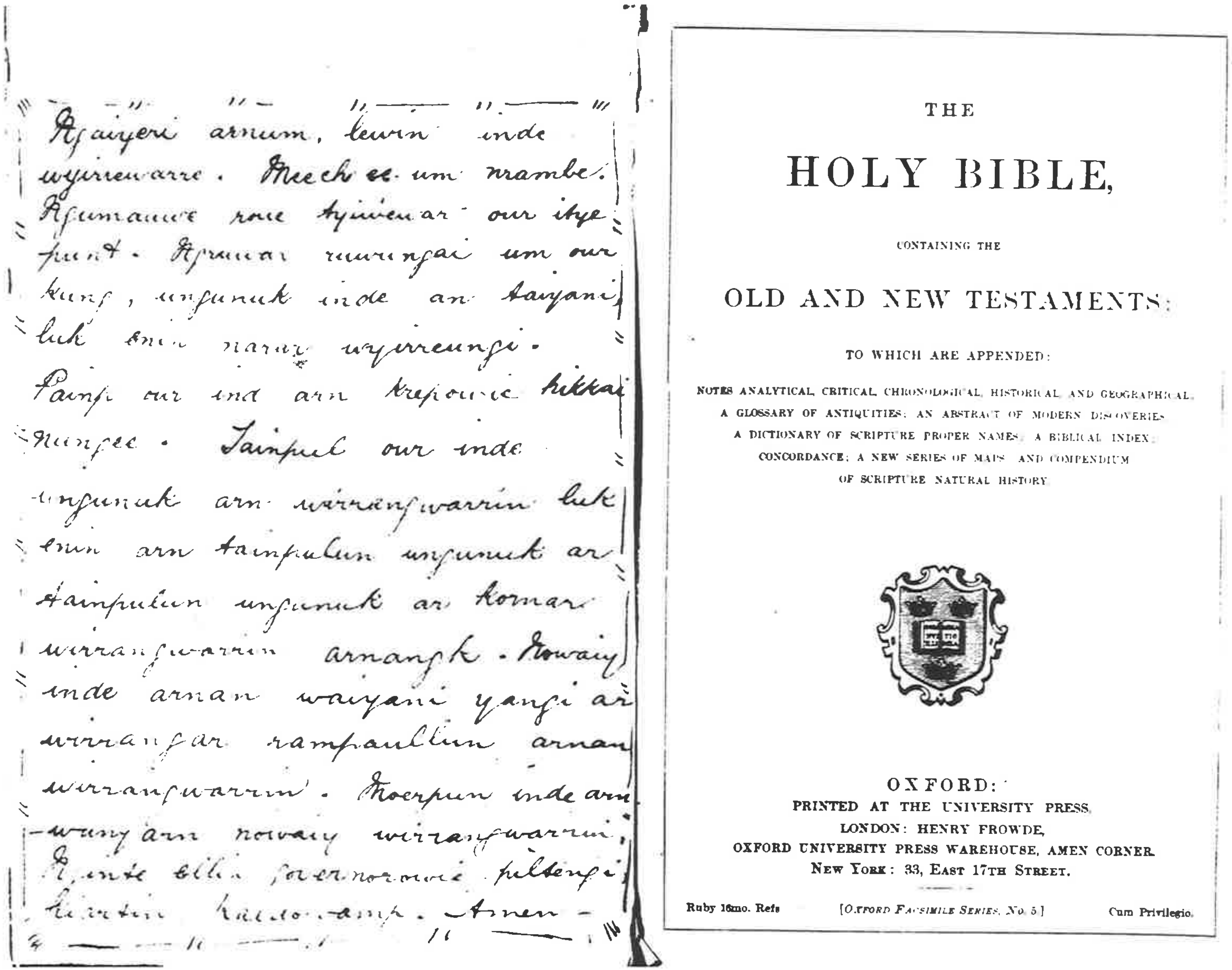
Three Ngarrindjeri leaders confer with the A.F.A. Secretary in Adelaide. From left: George Rankine, David Ngunaitponi, John Sexton and Mark Wilson (1937).

Alfred Cameron: farmer (circa 1940).

Harold Kropinyeri: a well-known Ngarrindjeri preacher who went to Point Pearce and became the religious leader there (circa 1940).

Mark Wilson (circa 1940).

The Lord's Prayer in Ngarrindjeri: written out by George Rankine opposite the title-page of his Bible. This Bible is now in the possession of his daughter, Mrs Jean Birt.



Ngaiyeri arnum, kewin inde
wyirriewarre. Meechi ee um nrambe.
Ngemauwe rone tyiwienar our itye
punt. Ngrauwar ruuringai um our
kung, ungunuk inde an taiyani
luk emin narar wyirreungi.
Paingi our ind arn krepowie hikkai
ninyee. Tainpul our inde
ungunuk arn wirrangwarrin luk
emin arn tainpulun ungunuk ar
tainpulun ungunuk ar kornar
wirrangwarrin arnangk. Nowaiy
inde arnan waiyani yangi ar
wirrangar rampaullun arnan
wirrangwarrin. Moerpun inde arn
wuny arn nowaiy wirrangwarrin.
Ninte ellin foreernoemie piltengi
hiarin haccoamp. Amen

THE

HOLY BIBLE,

CONTAINING THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS:

TO WHICH ARE APPENDED:

NOTES ANALYTICAL, CRITICAL, CHRONOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL, AND GEOGRAPHICAL,
A GLOSSARY OF ANTIQUITIES; AN ABSTRACT OF MODERN DISCOVERIES,
A DICTIONARY OF SCRIPTURE PROPER NAMES; A BIBLICAL INDEX;
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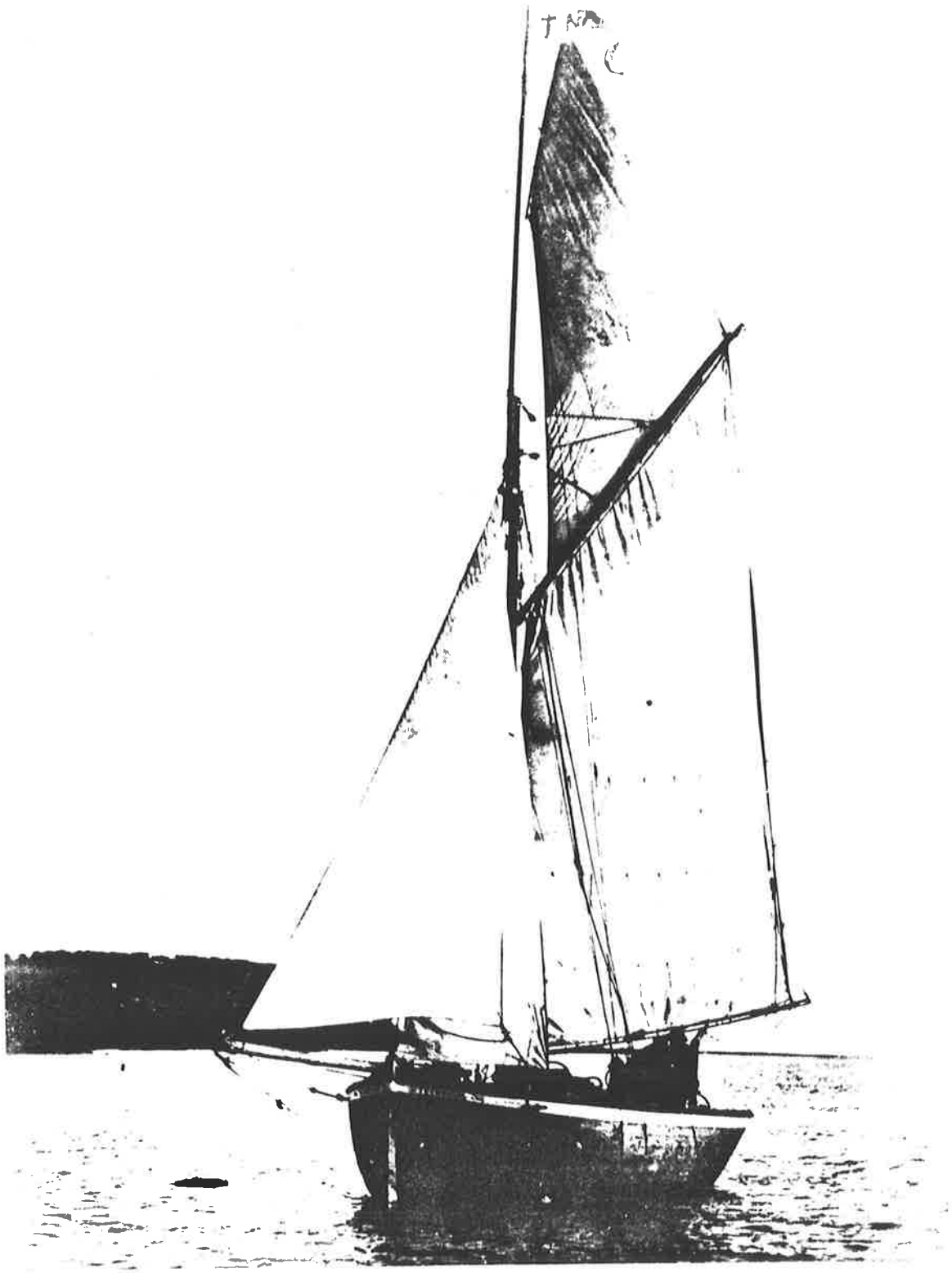
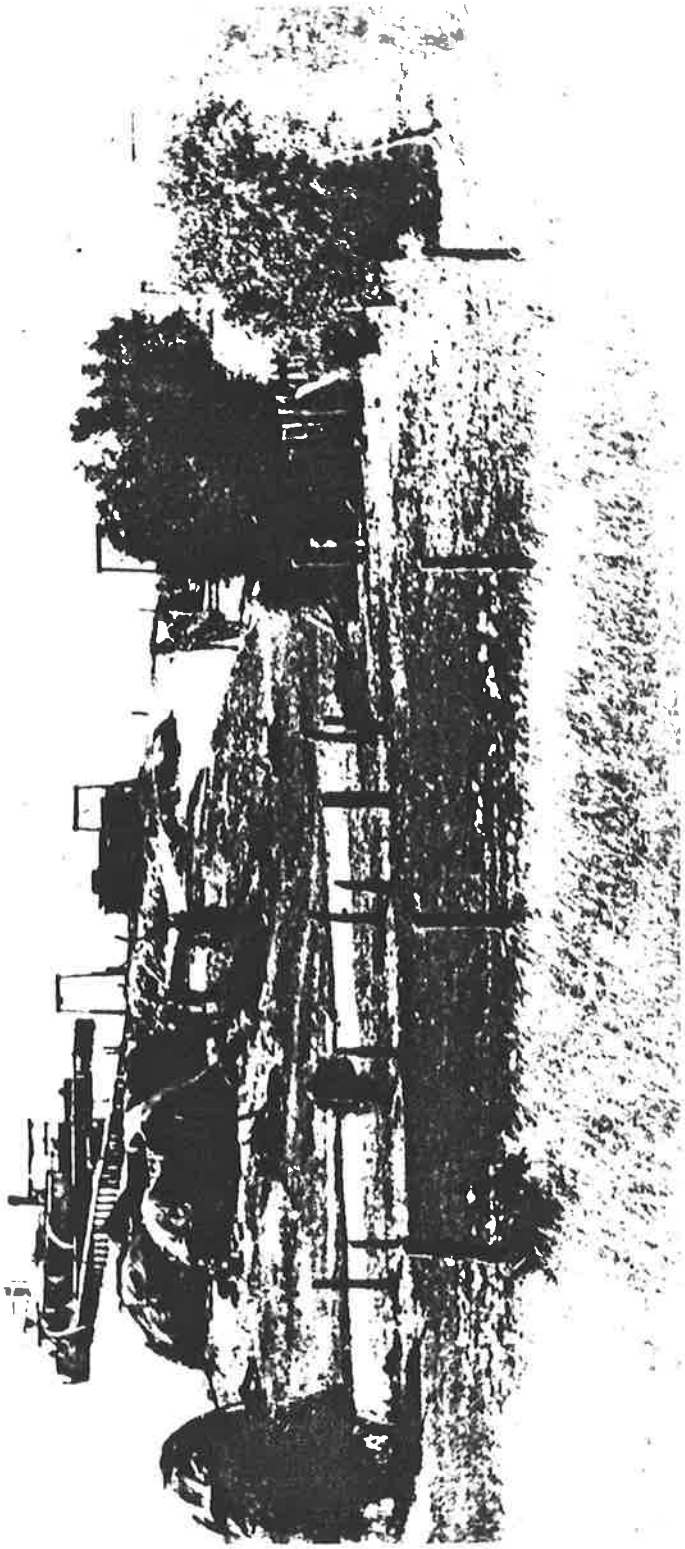
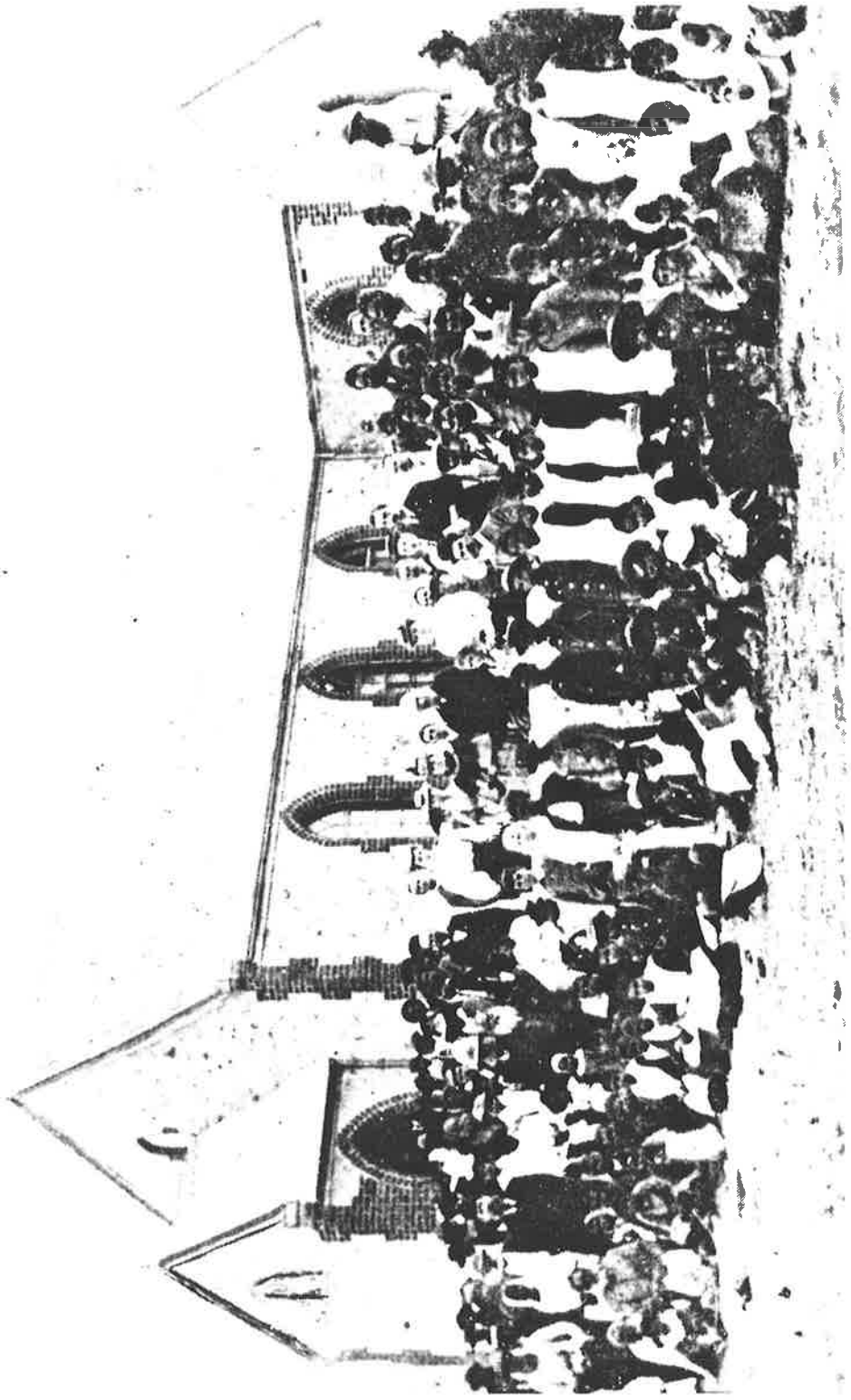


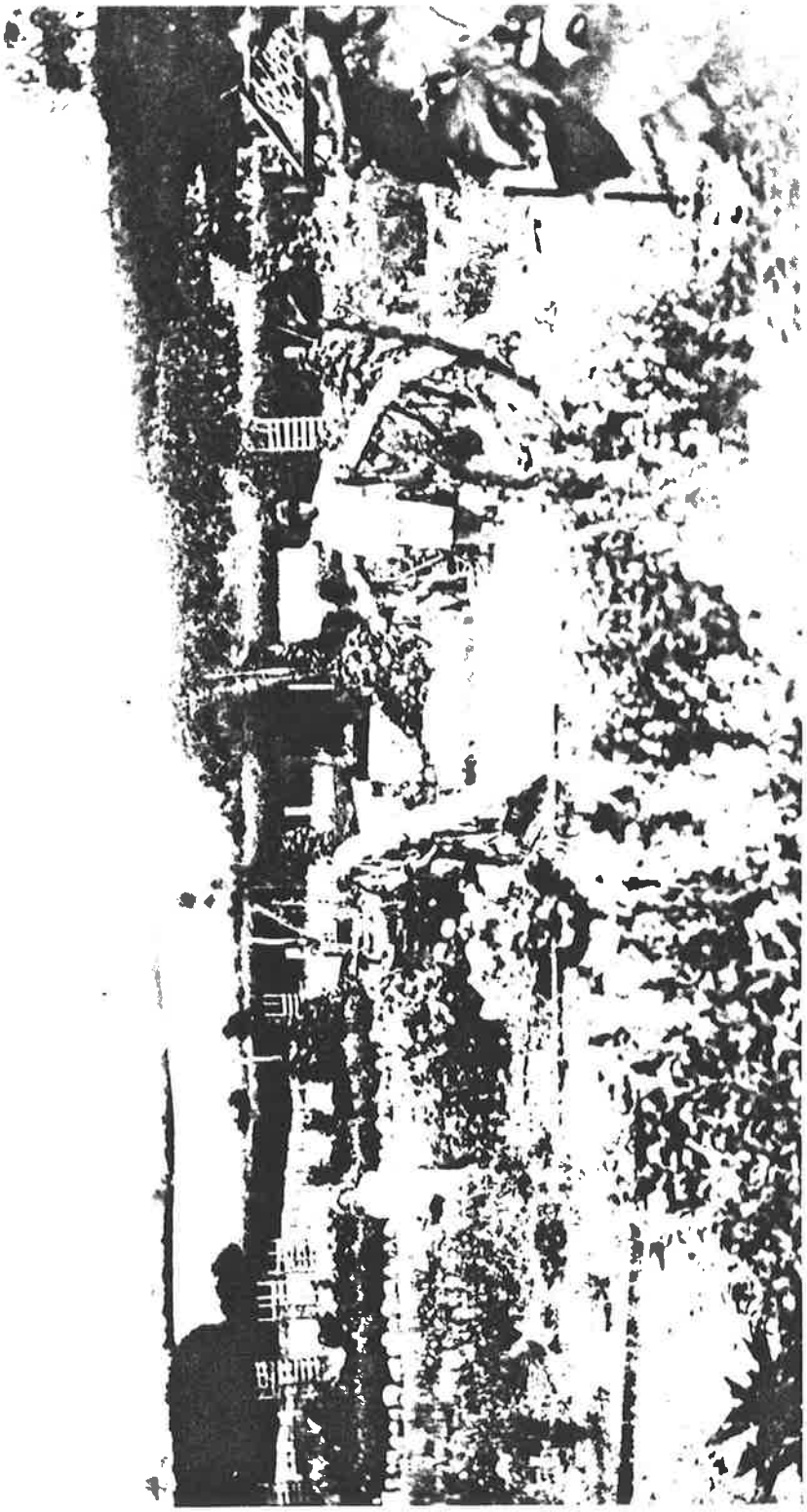
The Teenminnie under full sail and flying the flag of the A.F.A.



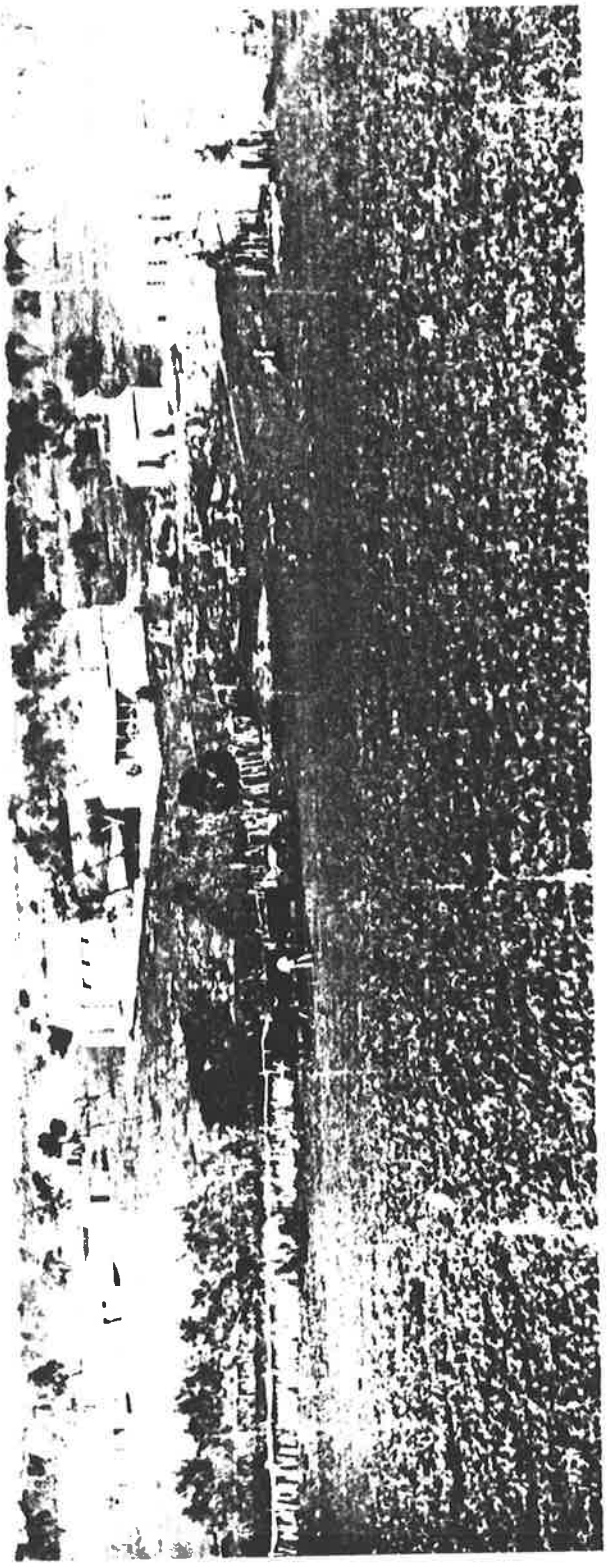
Paddle-steamers at Raukkan's jetty. Many of the older people still preferred to live in wurlies — even in the 1920's (March 1909).



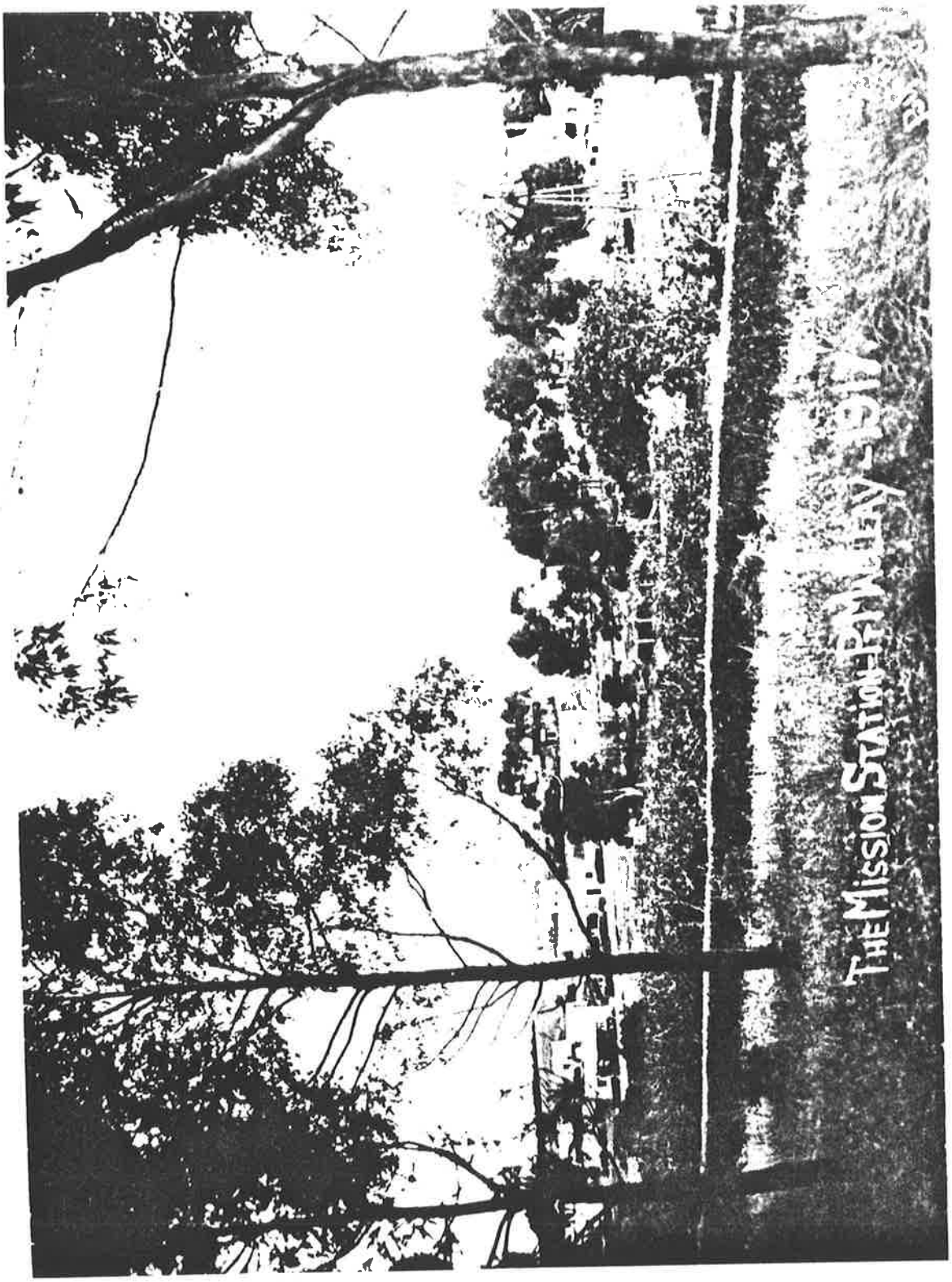
Group taken outside the Church at Raukkan after William MacHughes had added the transepts in 1891.



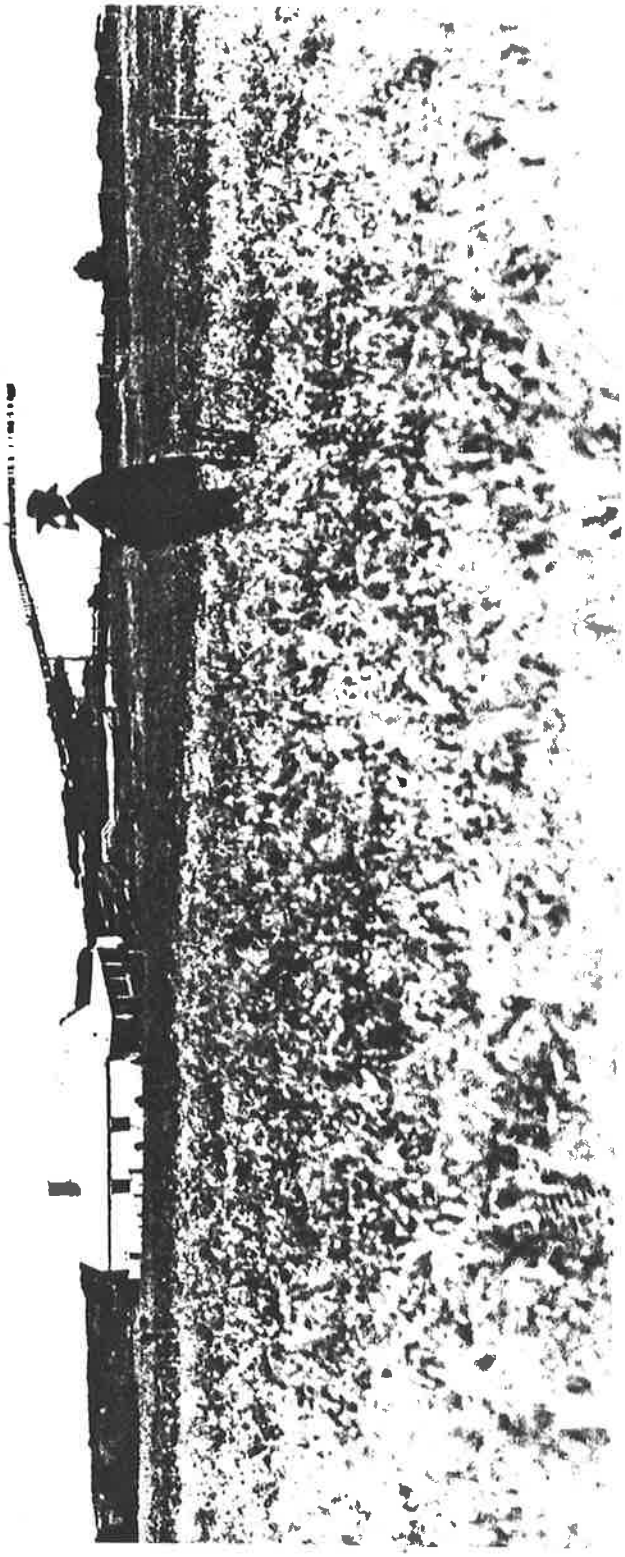
The Jubilee Garden at Raukkan — reclaimed from the old limestone quarry (circa 1906).



Raukkan in Taplin's time (circa 1870).



Raukkan in 1917.



Ambrose Redman, the woolshed and Lake Alexandrina.

The Ngarrindjeri became avid newspaper readers; a scene at Raukkan prior to World War One.