

Aborigines: Forecast Of Accomplishments

Aborigines in parliament, Aboriginal doctors and Aboriginal lawyers within the next six years—this was the forecast of the Aborigines' Advancement League's co-director, Mr. Bruce McGuiness, when addressing the Geelong branch.

Mr. McGuiness spoke enthusiastically of the recently formed Federal Tribal Council, which he said was formed to enable Aborigines to have absolute control of their own affairs.

He stressed that, in order to achieve their goals, Aborigines would continue to need the support of other Australians.

Apathy and ignorance of Aboriginal culture and history was a major obstacle to be overcome, not only in the general community but among Aborigines themselves.

He saw education of the public in Aboriginal affairs as one of the main functions of league branches.

Mr. McGuiness was questioned about the recent controversy regarding the visit of Roosevelt Brown, a leader of the Black Power movement.

He agreed that there had been a noticeable, although temporary, loss of support during the months following.

This he felt was perhaps due to a misunderstanding of the term "Black Power" which many people automatically equated with violence.

Mr. McGuiness stressed that, to Aborigines, Black Power simply meant the impowerment of black people to control their own destinies.

This principle had

achieved a great deal, not only for black people but for other oppressed minority groups such as the Polish community in Chicago.

This aspect had received little recognition or publicity, he said.

He suggested that Black Power was a logical and perhaps inevitable reaction to paternalism, which involved giving without allowing the recipients the opportunity to participate.

Once Aborigines had control of their own affairs, however, integration and co-operation would be more easily achieved.

This, he said, was happening in Victoria where a new level of interest and

understanding was taking place.

Mr. McGuiness introduced three young people, Mr. Wally Cooper, from the Ministry for Aboriginal Affairs, Phyllis Harrison, a comptometrist and Myra Atkinson, the league's receptionist.

An informal discussion followed during which members gained valuable insight into the feelings and aspiration of young Aboriginal people.

The president, Mr. R. Grills, thanked the visitors. The next meeting will be held in the South Geelong Methodist Hall, at 8 p.m., Wednesday, June 17.