

The Aboriginal History Project

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BLACKS' MOURNING DAY

"A MISTAKE"

Seek Privileges of Dominant Race

CANBERRA, Monday.

The possibility of Australian aborigines being given direct representation in the Federal Parliament in the hope that this may tend to help solve aboriginal problems was discussed in political circles here to-day and will come before the Federal Cabinet in the near future.

The idea is as yet in an entirely nebulous state and it cannot be indicated whether representation by a full-blooded aborigine or by a white man specifically charged with the care of native interests would be considered.

The matter is entirely one for discussion by Cabinet, but there is ample precedent for the introduction into Parliament even of a full-blooded native, for the Maoris have been directly represented in the New Zealand Parliament for many years.

The Government is very much concerned with the importance of doing something of a practical nature to bring aboriginal problems into better perspective. In some respects it is troubled by a superabundance of conflicting expert opinion, and it was suggested to-day that one means of fully and directly informing Parliament on native affairs would be to have an educated aborigine in Parliament.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Lyons), who is keenly and sympathetically interested in the future of the aborigines, will make history in Sydney on January 31 by being the first Prime Minister to directly meet the aborigines themselves for a discussion on their needs. He has arranged to receive a deputation on that day from the Aborigines' Progressive Association. This deputation will be composed entirely of aborigines, and it is understood it will be representative of most of the aboriginal interests in Australia. Certain requests will be put forward by the deputation. Mr. Lyons

Australia. Certain requests will be put forward by the deputation. Mr. Lyons has been most impressed by their representations up to the present.

Day of Mourning

The Minister for the Interior (Mr. McEwen) has received through Rev. J. H. Sexton, hon. secretary of the Aborigines' Friends Association a letter from Dr. David Unaipon, a full-blooded aborigine, in which Dr. Unaipon, speaking for the aborigines of Australia, takes exception to the proposal that the opening day of the anniversary celebration in Sydney should be regarded by the Australian aborigines as a day of mourning. Dr. Unaipon is an authority on native legends, on which he has written a book.

Prince of Tribe

Mr. Sexton's letter reads: "David Unaipon, the well-known native leader in Australia, a full-blooded aboriginal and prince of his tribe, has asked me to forward you the enclosed letter for