

# FITZROY ABORIGINES COMPLAIN OF PERSECUTION

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By a Special Reporter.

**F**ITZROY'S aboriginal colony is all indignation. I did not have to knock at any door when I made a round of the pitiable houses in which many of the dark folk, full-bloods and half-castes, lived. They were at the front gates, talking indignantly with indignant dark neighbors about Fitzroy councillors' complaints of their bad behavior.

Their resentment seemed well founded.

I looked in at Fitzroy police station. "These aborigines give us very little trouble," I was told. "Although there are about 100 of them in the district we rarely have to arrest any of them. Of course, they are not all good, and we may have to lock one up now and then—probably one in six months."

## CLEAN HOMES

The homes I saw were neither worse nor better, neither cleaner nor dirtier, than many in the same localities occupied by others. Some, though tumble-down slum shanties, were cleanly and neatly kept.

"It's terrible what we have to put up with," said a pleasant young woman standing in the bit of sunshine that came into one narrow street. A wide-eyed curious youngster peeped out behind her skirts. "Some of our people have been put out of their houses—some of the nicest people you could meet—just because they were black. All the aborigines are being persecuted for the behavior of a lot of hooligans and two or three badly behaved blacks."

There were other visitors when I went to a group of houses in Little George Street occupied by aborigines.

Fitzroy City Council medical officer, health inspector, and a councillor were making an inspection for report to the council.

"We know these houses are snocking," they told the council officials, "but we can't get anything better. We are lucky to be able to get houses at all—par-

ticularly people with families. Because we can't get enough houses, we have to overcrowd the ones we can get."

Any trouble blacks cause was not caused by residents, but mainly by a few strangers, one woman told me, when the inspection was over. These few trouble-makers should be sent back where they came from.

Nearly all the aboriginal men living in this street were steady-going munition workers, a man who had been working all night at Maribyrnong said.

Many of them were fighting with the A.I.F. abroad. Since these men had gone, hooligans had pestered their women folk.

## LARRIKIN ELEMENT

"Yes, a mob of larrikins, 100 or more of them, tried to force their way in to break up a children's birthday party at my place a few nights ago," said a woman whose husband was in Syria. "There was no-one in the house except women and children."

Mrs Tucker, vice-president of the Aborigines' League, and wife of an aboriginal Digger serving abroad, said her people generally were quiet and decent. Because of persecution, the aborigines had been afraid to continue meetings for singing and gum leaf band practice for patriotic fund concerts and camp entertainments.