

# 'Great white father' image hit

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## by poetess

CANBERRA.—Aboriginal poet Mrs. Kath Walker attacked what she called "The great white father attitudes" on government settlements for Aborigines.

Paternalistic and misguided attitudes on the settlements meant that the assimilation policy in Australia was a farce, she claimed.

Mrs. Walker was addressing the annual meeting of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders over the weekend.

Mrs. Walker said the indigenous people were ill-equipped to stand up to the fast-running stream of Australian society.

They were given only a bare knowledge of this society within the settlements and lack of knowledge of education, housing and health took its toll of these people.

Mrs. Walker made a scathing attack on laws discriminating against political rights of Aborigines.

### Imprisonment

Quoting Section 26A, paragraph 3 of the Queensland State Electoral Act she said it was an offence punishable by a \$200 fine or six months' imprisonment to encourage indigenous people to enrol as electors.

"If the religious beliefs of the Australian people are allowed to penetrate into the settlements then surely the political beliefs of the Australian people also should be allowed," she said.

Mrs. Walker was bitterly critical of a text book used for grade 8 pupils in Queensland schools.

"I could not leave this conference without letting you see the type of muck we are handing down to the next generation," she said of a chapter in the book, *History and Civics*, by V. Maranta.

Mrs. Walker said one passage in the chapter said that Aborigines did not experience the full benefits of citizenship because the Government felt an obligation to protect and assist them in the same way as minors under 21 years. It also said that fringe dwellers were prevented from entering white society by two serious obstacles.

"These were their own unwillingness to lift themselves out of the sub-standard life they have chosen to follow and secondly an unwillingness by the white community to extend to them a welcoming hand — not because of racial prejudice but because of the very sub-standard behavior which seemed to be a part of most fringe dwellers manner of living."

She was applauded when she said the book should not be in the hands of school children.