

## Adopted aboriginals 'in' thing in Australia

MELBOURNE — (CP) — The new "in" thing among white Australians is to have an adopted aboriginal child.

"Having a black baby in the house is fashionable," says Stan Davey, director of the Aboriginal Advancement League. "Some whites adopt black babies and treat them like pets, like poodles."

Others are do-gooders. But many get fed up after a time and farm their adopted children out to someone else.

In the state of Victoria, the government has appealed to all whites with adopted aboriginal children to take the children to the social welfare department where their future can be sorted out.

Edward Meagher, Victoria's minister for aboriginal affairs, said the adoption problem has got out of hand. His remarks followed the disclosure of these facts:

—There were 300 cases of illegal adoption in Victoria in one week; some white couples were caring for up to 15 aboriginal children as well as five or six of their own; aboriginal children were being passed from family to family or living in appalling conditions.

—And there was the case of a white woman who used a solution of household bleach on a 19-month-old aboriginal baby she wanted to keep. She was trying to bleach the child white.

—One of the most heart-rending cases concerned four-year-old aboriginal twins, a boy and a girl. They were picked up by a woman who found she couldn't cope with them both so she passed one to another woman. The children's real parents knew nothing about the separation.

What's so particularly shocking is it's all illegal. Adoptions are supposed to be carried out only through the government's social welfare department.

The adoptions are carried out, in fact, in the most off-handed way.

There have been cases of white women going up to pregnant aboriginal women in the streets of Melbourne and other big towns and offering to adopt the expected baby.

Why does a mother agree to part with her children?

Reginald Worthy, director of aboriginal affairs, explained:

"Because she has been conditioned to think white people always know best. You can always get a 'yes' from an aboriginal because they are afraid of trouble. They're not used to speaking up for themselves. If they do they are shouted down.

"The tragedy is that these whites are happy while they have a cuddly black baby. But when the child grows up they don't want him any more."