

LEAGUE HITS AT EVEN LEGAL ADOPTIONS

THE ABORIGINES ADVANCEMENT LEAGUE is against the adoption of aboriginal children by white families.

The secretary of the league, Mr Stan Davey, said this yesterday.

"These adoptions are very nice for the first four or five years, when the child is still a baby," he said.

"But we have found things often break down when the child reaches its sub-teens, and becomes aware of the discriminations around him."

Mr Davey said the league was pleased the Department of Aboriginal Affairs had taken up the issue of unofficial "adoptions" of aboriginal children by white families.

Mr Davey said there was general good will towards aboriginals, and people sought to express this by taking care of aboriginal children.

Too many of these people, however, were motivated by the "satisfaction of being a do-gooder," he said.

"They don't really look at the issues involved. Families are split up, and the child feels isolated, different and lost."

MP shocked

On Monday night, the Victorian Council of Social Services was told at least 300 aboriginal children were being "looked after" by white families.

The Director of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr R. M. Worthy, told the council that many of these families refused to return the children to their natural parents.

The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Meagher, said yesterday he was "shocked" at this figure and urged all these "foster parents" to contact

his department or the Social Welfare Department.

Mr Worthy said yesterday that many white families took in aboriginal children for status-seeking motives, but soon wearied of the responsibilities involved.

He cited the case of a woman who "collected" five part-aboriginal children, found that she could not cope, and then "farmed them out" to five other families without consulting their real parents.

Mr Worthy also told of aboriginal twins, aged four, who had been split up because their foster parents found they could not cope with two children.

Another woman wanted to keep a 18-month-old aboriginal girl whom she tried to "bleach white" with a mild solution of household detergent.

"Fortunately the child was unharmed," he said.

Mr Worthy said these were just "three of the 300-odd cases" his department had found since they began investigating a week ago.

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